The Evolution of the Devanagari Script



Uz-Translations

Special Lecture

Study of the Indus Script[1)]

Asko PARPOLA

INTRODUCTION

The International Conference of Eastern Studies has this year its 50th jubilee session. To deliver a special lecture on this occasion is a great honour, and I accepted the Tōhō Gakkai's kind invitation with hesitation, fully aware that there are many scholars who would be much more worthy of this honour. But I did not want to dismiss this opportunity to speak to a wide gathering of orientalists, as the study of the Indus script would certainly profit if experts in East Asian writing systems could be inspired to contribute with their insights.

The Indus Civilization

First a few words about the historical context of the Indus script. The Indus or Mature Harappan Civilization was the most extensive urban culture of its time, about 2600–1900 BCE. Its area comprized one million square kilometres, and more than one thousand of its settlements have been identified so far. Yet the very existence of this Bronze Age Civilization was unknown until 1924, when Sir John Marshall announced its discovery on the basis of excavations that were started at the two largest sites, Harappa in the Punjab and Mohenjo-daro in Sind. Ever since, archaeological and other research has been constantly en-

1) Paper read at the 50th ICES Tokyo Session on 19 May 2005 in Tokyo. I have shortened the text distributed at the conference and made a few additions (in particular, note 14 and consideration of two papers by Massimo Vidale that I received in a preliminary form in July 2005).

larging our knowledge of this early civilization.[2] Particularly important have been the long-continued recent excavations at Harappa[3] and Dholavira.

The Indus Civilization came into being as the result of a long cultural evolution in the Indo-Iranian borderlands. From the first stage of development,[4] about 7000–4300 BCE, some twenty relatively small Neolithic villages are known, practically all in highland valleys. People raised cattle, sheep and goats. They cultivated wheat and barley, and stored it in granaries. Pottery was handmade, and human and bovine figurines attest to fertility cults. Ornaments reflect small-scale local trade.

Stage two, about 4300–3200 BCE, is Chalcolithic. Village size grew to dozens of hectares. Settlements spread eastwards beyond the Indus to Cholistan to the delta of the ancient Sarasvati river, apparently with seasonal migrations. Copper tools were made, and pottery became wheel-thrown and beautifully painted. Ceramic similarities with southern Turkmenistan and northern Iran also suggest considerable mobility and trade.

Stage three is the Early Harappan period about 3200–2600 BCE. Many new sites came into existance, also in the Indus Valley, which was a challenging environment on account of the yearly floods, while the silt made the fields very fertile. Communal granaries disappeared, and large storage jars appeared in house units. Potter's marks suggest private ownership, and stamp seals bearing geometrical motifs point to development in administration. Irrigation canals were constructed, and ad-

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2) The results are being collected in a book series in progress called *The Indus Age* by Gregory L. Possehl, with a monumental volume on *The Beginnings* (1999). Possehl has recently produced a summary for the general public (2002). Several other good surveys have come out during the past few years as well: Jansen et al. 1991; Kenoyer 1998; *Indus Civilization Exhibition*, 2000; McIntosh 2002. There are also two good websites, one of them in Japan, providing up-to-date information: http://www.harappa.com; http://bosei.cc.u-tokai.ac.jp/~indus/english/index.html.

3) See reports of the Harappa excavations by Meadow et al. and http://www.harappa.com.

4) I am following here the periodization suggested by Possehl (2002).

vances were made in all crafts. Similarities in pottery, seals, figurines, ornaments etc. document intensive caravan trade with Central Asia and the Iranian plateau. There were already towns with walls and a grid pattern of streets, such as Rahman Dheri. Terracotta models of bullock carts attest to improved transport in the Indus Valley. This led to considerable cultural uniformity over a wide area.

A relatively short but still poorly known transition phase, between 2700–2500 BCE, turned the Early Harappan culture into the Mature Indus Civilization. During this phase the Indus script came into being. The size of the burned brick, already standardized during the Early Harappan period, was fixed in the ratio 1: 2: 4 most effective for bonding. Weights of carefully cut and polished chert cubes form a combined binary and decimal system.[5)] The society became so highly organized that it was able to complete enormous projects, like building the city of Mohenjo-daro around 2500 BCE.

The acropolis of Mohenjo-daro, a cultural and administrative centre, has as its foundation a 12 metre high artificial platform of 20 hectares. Just the platform is estimated to have required 400 days of 10,000 labourers. The lower city of at least 80 hectares had streets oriented according to the cardinal directions and provided with a network of covered drains. Many of the usually two-storied houses were spacious and protected from the dust and crowd of the streets and had bathrooms and wells. The water-engineering of Mohenjo-daro is unparallelled in the ancient world: the city is estimated to have had some 700 wells constructed with tapering bricks so strong that they have not collapsed in 5000 years. The Great Bath was made watertight with bitumen and a high corbelled outlet made it possible to empty it easily. The massive city walls are supposed to be mainly defenses against flood water.

The absence of palaces and temples — which may well be illusory[6)] —

5) The ratios are 1/16, 1/8, 1/6, 1/4, 1/2, 1 (= 13 g), 2, 4, 8, 16, . . . 800.

6) Massimo Vidale (in press b) suggests the presence of a palace complex that consists of “houses” (including a private bath resembling the Great Bath) in the HR area of Mohenjo-daro.

makes the Indus Civilization strikingly different from its counterparts for instance in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Another reason is the Harappan concern for civic amenities such as wells and drains, with the result that their cities attest to considerable social egality. It is thought that the political power was less centralized and more corporate.[7)]

Development of water traffic made it possible to transport heavy loads along the rivers, and to start direct sea trade with the Gulf and Mesopotamia. Over thirty Indus seals and other materials of Harappan origin, such as stained carnelian beads, have been found in Western Asia. On the other hand, a single Gulf seal excavated at the Harappan port town of Lothal is the only object of clearly Western Asiatic origin discovered in the Greater Indus Valley.

Around 2000–1900 BCE the Indus Civilization came to an end in the Indus Valley, although it lingered some centuries longer in Gujarat and Maharashtra. Multiple reasons are assumed to have caused this downfall of urban life, which led also to the disappearance of the Indus script. The Harappans are estimated to have numbered about one million. This population continued to live, but the culture gradually changed. One important factor of change was that new people started coming to Greater Indus Valley. First among these were the long-time neighbours of the Indus Civilization, people of the Bactria and Margiana Archaeological Complex (c. 2600–1400 BCE).[8)]

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7) Cf. Possehl 2002: 56–57, 148–149. — One could compare the 'republics' of northeastern India in early historical times, governed by a *gaṇa* or *saṃgha*, and described by Sharma (1968). They have roots in Vedic times, when *"the many rājan-s . . . denied permanent overlordship to any in their midst"* (Scharfe 1989: 233; cf. Sharma 1968: 8–12). *"According to a later Buddhist tradition there were 7,007* rājan-s in *Vaiśāli ruling jointly through their assembly; K[auṭilya's] A[rthaśārastra] XI 1, 5 speaks of the men of the saṃgha-s that live on the title* rājan" (Scharfe 1989: 233). Strabo (Geography 15,1,37), referring to anonymous writers in the plural (Megasthenes is mentioned as the source in the next sentence), states: *"They tell also of a kind of aristocratic order of government that was composed outright of five thousand counsellors, each of whom furnishes the [[new]] commonwealth with an elephant"* (tr. Jones 1930: VII, 65; I suggest deleting the word *new* in Jones' translation of *tôi koinôi*) (cf. Scharfe 1989: 233, n. 24).

8) For the BMAC, see especially Sarianidi 1986; 1990; 1998a; 1998b; 2001; 2002; 2005; Amiet 1986; Hiebert 1994; Kosarev et al. (eds.) 2004 [2005]; for new evidence from

Attempts at Deciphering the Indus Script

Attempts at deciphering the Indus script started even before the existence of the Indus Civilization was recognized. When Sir Alexander Cunningham reported the first known Indus seal from Harappa in 1875, he assumed that this unique find was a foreign import. A few years later he supposed that the seal might bear signs of the Brahmi script from its unknown early phase. After Cunningham, many scholars have connected the Indus script with the Brahmi script, which was used in India about 1500 years later. Among them was G. R. Hunter, who in the late 1920s studied the Indus inscriptions at first hand in Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, and analyzed them structurally in his valuable doctoral dissertation, where he also compared the script with other early writing systems. The archaeologist S. R. Rao in his book *The decipherment of the Indus script* (1982) maintains that the Indus script is the basis of not only the Brahmi script but also of the Semitic consonantal alphabet, which most scholars derive from the Egyptian hieroglyphs and take as the basis of the Brahmi script. Like so many other Indian scholars, Rao reads the Indus texts in an Aryan language close to Vedic Sanskrit.

Immediately after the discovery of the Indus Civilization became known in 1924, the British Assyriologists A. H. Sayce, C. J. Gadd and Sidney Smith pointed to its resemblance to the Elamite and Mesopotamian civilizations and compared the Indus signs with the pictograms of the Proto-Elamite and archaic Sumerian scripts. In 1974, the British Assyriologist James Kinnier Wilson tried to revive the hypothesis that the Indus language is related to Sumerian in his book *Indo-Sumerian*.

The Czech Assyriologist Bedřich Hrozný in his youth recognized that the cuneiform tablets found in Anatolia were written in an Indo-European language, Hittite. He immediately became famous and later on tried to decipher many unknown scripts, including the Indus script. Hrozný's starting point was an Indus-like seal with three somewhat

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Gilund, a site of the Chalcolithic Ahar-Banas Complex of Mewar, Rajasthan, see Possehl et al. 2004. See also Parpola 2002a; 2002b.

obscure cuneiform characters, and the resemblance that he saw between the Hittite hieroglyphs and the Indus signs. He reads many different signs with the same phonetic value; the resulting texts reproduce a few alleged divine names in endless variations.

In 1932, a Hungarian engineer, Vilmos Hevesy compared the Indus script with the *rongorongo* tablets of the Easter Island. Because the similarities made an impression on the French Orientalist Paul Pelliot, this comparison has been taken seriously although the two scripts are separated by more than 20,000 kilometres and some 3500 years. The comparison is useless also because the *rongorongo* tablets have not been deciphered.

Sir John Marshall thought that the language of the Indus script most likely belonged to the Dravidian family, which is still represented in the Indus Valley and Baluchistan by the Brahui language. Piero Meriggi, later an acknowledged authority of the Hittite and Proto-Elamite scripts, agreed with Marshall about the linguistic affinity in his paper on the Indus script from 1934, but refrained from a phonetic decipherment and tried to understand the signs from their pictorial forms. The Dravidian hypothesis was the basis of Father Henry Heras's ambitious attempt, which culminated in a large book published in 1953. In my opinion, Heras was right in his readings of a couple of signs, but these could not be distinguished from a great number of nonsensical interpretations.

By coincidence, in 1964 two teams of computer-assisted scholars started working on the Indus script independently of each other, one in Russia, and one in Finland. Both teams came to the conclusion that the language was Dravidian. The Russian team was led by Yurij Knorozov, who initiated the decipherment of the Mayan script, and included a Dravidian specialist, Nikita Gurov. The Russians initially proposed only few interpretations, but in their final report from 1979, meanings are assigned to all the Indus signs. Their use of the computer seems to be limited to a comparison of samples of the Indus and Egyptian scripts. The Russians never published a text corpus or any computer

analysis of Indus sign sequences.

Our Finnish team consisted of Seppo Koskenniemi, a computer specialist, my Assyriologist brother Simo Parpola and myself. We were inspired by the decipherment of the Mycenaean Linear B script without the help of bilinguals in the 1950s. We started by preparing a machine-readable text corpus, and published an automated method to classify characters of unknown ancient scripts in 1970, and the first computer-concordance of the Indus texts in 1973. A revised computer corpus and concordance was published by Seppo's brother Kimmo Koskenniemi and myself in 1979–82. In 1971 I went to Pakistan and India in order to verify our readings from the original objects kept in museums. After discovering there hundreds of unpublished inscriptions, I initiated the project of publishing a comprehensive photographic *Corpus of Indus Seals and Inscriptions* in international collaboration under the auspices of the Unesco. We proposed some Dravidian readings in 1969–70. My own efforts to develop these readings culminated in a book published in 1994.

The Tamil scholar Iravatham Mahadevan, who has done remarkable work in the field of Old Tamil epigraphy, started working on the Indus material in Indian museums in 1971. In 1977, Mahadevan brought out his very useful computer-corpus and concordance. He has published also several papers proposing Dravidian readings for Indus signs.

It is not possible for me to mention all attempts at decipherment here, let alone to criticize them. Gregory L. Possehl has published a fairly comprehensive and in many ways very useful survey in 1996.[9] Possehl's final verdict is that all attempts are invalid.

Is the Indus Script a Writing System?

Quite recently, students of the Indus script have been confronted with

9) *"Possehl's book is a valuable survey, but the reader should be warned that it contains some serious factual errors and many misprints"* (Robinson 2002: 331a). For a competent shorter survey, see Robinson 2002: 264–295.

the question: Is it really a script? Does it constitute a real writing system in the sense of being tightly bound to language? This is categorically denied in an article provocatively entitled *"The collapse of the Indus-script thesis: The myth of a literate Harappan Civilization."* The paper, published in December 2004 by Steve Farmer, Richard Sproat and Michael Witzel, was discussed one week later in a longer noncommittal note by Andrew Lawler (2004) in the *Science* journal.

Lawler's Review

"Outsider revels in breaking academic taboos" is Lawler's heading for a page-long characterization of the main author, Steve Farmer, who is a historian by training. Farmer turned his attention to India in 1999, and Lawler quotes him saying, *"I did't know anything about this stuff. I was the naïve outsider too dumb not to recognize the field's taboos."* Lawler quotes several scholars who are unconvinced, among them Gregory Possehl, who says: *"I don't think his ideas are interesting or viable, and I'm surprised they have raised interest."*[10)]

"At this point, however, that interest is undeniable," concludes Lawler (p. 2028), who points out that Farmer *"has attracted important converts, including his coauthors."* In an interview with Lawler, Michael Witzel, Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Studies at Harvard University, *"says he was shocked when he first heard Farmer's contention in 2001. . . . 'So I was very skeptical'. Now he is throwing his scholarly weight behind the new thesis . . . ."* (p. 2026–7).

Richard Sproat: Conclusions from General Statistics

One of the authors, Richard Sproat, is a noted computer linguist. He seems to be responsible for the comparison of the Indus sign frequencies with Egyptian, Sumerian and Chinese texts and Scottish heraldic blazons. Sproat's conclusions are that *"such studies can show that the Indus system could not have been a Chinese-style script, since symbol*

10) Lawler 2004: 2028.

frequencies in the two systems differ too widely, and the total numbers of Indus symbols are too few. But studies of general sign frequencies by themselves cannot determine whether the Indus system was a 'mixed' linguistic script . . . or exclusively a system of nonlinguistic signs" (p. 29).

Thus Sproat actually does not deny the possibility that Indus signs may represent a script similar to the Mesopotamian type, though he thinks it is different from the Egyptian type. This difference is demonstrated in a statistical table, which shows that signs are repeated within a single inscription much more often in Egyptian cartouches than in Indus seals of a similar length. In later times, many cartouches were written with uni-consonantal signs virtually amounting to an alphabetic script, where this type of repetition is natural. If Sumerian seals were similarly analysed, undoubtedly the figures would be closer to those of the Indus seals.

The Principal Arguments of Farmer et al.

The principal arguments of Farmer et al. for the drastic conclusions of the paper are the following. *"Indus inscriptions were neither able nor intended to encode detailed 'messages', not even in the approximate ways performed by formal mnemonic systems in other nonliterate societies"* (p. 42) because they are too short — on the average only five signs long — (p. 22, cf. also Lawler 2004: 2028) and because they contain too many rare signs — between 25 to 50 per cent of the around 400–600 different signs are attested only once.[11] Moreover, they miss the kind of sign repetition evidenced in the Egyptian cartouches: *"Most importantly, nowhere in*

11) *"Further evidence that clashes with the Indus-script thesis shows up in the large number of unique symbols (or 'singletons') and other rare signs that turn up in the inscriptions. . . . A number of inscriptions also contain more than one singleton in addition to other rare signs, making it difficult to imagine how those signs could have possibly functioned in a widely disseminated 'script' (Fig. 7)"* (Farmer et al. 2004: 36). Among the three examples quoted in Fig. 7, MS 2645 is claimed to have two 'singletons'; however, if this seal is genuine and not a forgery, as I strongly suspect (it comes from antiques trade, not from excavations), the two signs are variants of the signs no. 11 and 337 in the sign list in Parpola 1994: 70–78. — Most of the rare signs occur in the midst of more frequent signs.

Indus inscriptions do we find convincing evidence of the random-looking types of sign repetition expected in contemporary phonetic or semi-phonetic scripts" (p. 29–30; cf. also p. 48).

None of these arguments is conclusive, and can be easily controverted. The Chinese writing system has a very large number of signs that are rarely used in newspapers. All ancient scripts, but especially the logo-syllabic ones, had their rare signs. The repetition argument needs a longer discussion.

Sign Repetitions within Single Inscriptions

Although Farmer et al. in passing refer to logo-syllabic writing systems of the Mesopotamian type and their functioning, their argumentation implies that in order to represent a language-based script the Indus signs should largely be phoneticized in the manner of the Egyptian cartouches. However, in early logo-syllabic scripts one sign often stands for a complete word. Even a seal with a single sign can express its owner, and there is mostly little reason for sign repetition in short seal texts written in an early logo-syllabic script of the Sumerian type.

Farmer et al. themselves admit that *"some Indus signs do repeat in single inscriptions, sometimes including many repetitions in a row"* (p. 31). However, they do not accept the evidence of such duplications: *"Whatever the origins of these different types of duplications,*[12] *all that is critical for our purposes is to note again the lack of any suggestions in them of the random-looking repetitions typical even of monumental scripts like Luwian or Egyptian hieroglyphs"* (p. 36).

Yet sign repetition within single inscriptions does occur, also repetition of the type so vociferously missed by Farmer et al. The sequence of two signs and a third sign are repeated in a ten-sign text in M-682. A

12) I agree with Farmer et al. that some of these duplications imply quantification (cf. Parpola 1994: 81). The duplication of some other signs is surmised to *"emphasize their magical or political power."* Farmer et al. do not mention that such sign reduplications can reflect linguistic reduplications — often emphatic as in Dravidian (and other Indian languages) in onomatopoeic words, or grammatical, as in Sumerian nominal plurals. See also the interpretation of the 'eye' + 'eye' sequence in the final section of this paper.

different sequence of two signs is repeated in the ten-sign text K-10. One sign is repeated three times, but not in a row, in the ten-sign text M-634, and a different sign is similarly repeated three times but not in a row in the six-sign text 1093.[13] Two further signs in addition to those already mentioned occur twice but not in a row in the eleven-sign text M-1169 and the eight-sign text M-357 respectively. The last mentioned text is a "bar-seal," a category considered particularly crucial for the script thesis by Farmer et al. (p. 33).

Lost Texts

When Farmer et al. wonder how a script with so many single-occurrence signs could possibly have worked over a wide area, they speak as if our present corpus of texts would represent everything there ever was. But thousands of seals come from Mohenjo-daro alone and yet less than one tenth of that single city has been excavated. The number of single-occurrence signs would surely be reduced if the whole city was excavated.

Indeed, an integral part of the thesis of Farmer et al. is the claim that the types of inscriptions we know from the excavated material is everything there ever was. They categorically reject the much repeated early assumption that longer texts may have been written on *"birch bark, palm leaves, parchment, wood, or cotton cloth, any of which would have perished in the course of ages"* (Marshall 1931: I, 39).

Alexander's historians mention cloth as writing material used in the Indus Valley. Cotton has been cultivated there since Chalcolithic times, and is supposed to have been one of the main export items of the Harappans. Yet all the millions of pieces of cotton cloth produced by the Harappans have disappeared, save just a few microscopic fibers preserved in association of scrap pieces of metal. Along with seed finds, however, those fibers do preserve the information that cotton was actually cultivated and processed. In the same way, the thousands of

13) I.e., Marshall 1931: III, pl. 106, no. 93. For the other texts quoted here see Joshi & Parpola 1987 and Shah & Parpola 1991.

short inscriptions on durable materials have preserved the information that the Indus Civilization did have a script of its own.[14)]

That the Indus script changed very little in 600 years is taken as evidence that there were no manuscripts, as the scribes everywhere tended to develop a cursive style. However, allographs show that Indus signs were occasionally simplified very much. Moreover, the Egyptian hieroglyphs preserved their monumental pictographic shapes for 3000 years.

Farmer et al. also miss evidence for Harappan writing equipment. They discredit four respected Indus archaeologists — Ernest Mackay, George Dales, Masatoshi Konishi and B. B. Lal — who have interpreted some finds as writing equipment, because these interpretations *"are no longer accepted by any active researchers"* (p. 25). Konishi's paper was published in 1987 and B. B. Lal wrote as recently as 2002.[15)]

The Parallel of Non-Linguistic Symbolic Systems

If the Indus signs do not form a language-based writing system, what was their function? Farmer et al. see in them *"a relatively simple system of religious-political signs that could be interpreted in any language"* (p. 45). The non-linguistic symbols of Mesopotamian iconography are mentioned as a particularly close and relevant parallel. These are images representing various deities, celestial phenomena, animals and plants, tools and commodities, and more abstract symbols like the swastika and an omega-looking sign. There is no question that these symbols — which are arranged in regular rows with a definite order only in stelae and boundary stones dated between 1500 and 600 BC — do resemble

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14) A fragment of a convex partially burnt sealing with two impressions of one and the same stamp seal on the outside preserves faint script signs on the inside (DK 12145 = Mackay 1938: I, 349 and II, pl. XC: 17 = M-426 in Joshi & Parpola 1987: 105; now in the care of the Archaeological Survey of India as ASI 63.10.201). The inside of this sealing should be carefully examined with microscope to determine whether it really was fixed on a wooden rod and whether the script signs were written on that rod.

15) Lal's book does not count because it is popular and politically biased (Farmer et al. 2004: p. 25).

the Indus signs, and are therefore highly useful for their pictorial understanding, but the same applies to the pictograms of other ancient scripts.

Massimo Vidale (in press) stresses the fact that the Indus script — with its 400 standardized signs, which occur with recurring sequences in standard rows that have a preferred direction — is far from being "simple" when compared to non-linguistic symbolic systems closer to the Indus script in space and time. Vidale discusses in detail the different systems of potter's marks and iconographic symbols used during the third millennium at the Namazga V sites (southern Turkmenistan), Shahr-i Sokhta (Iranian Sistan), Tepe Yahya, Shahdad, Jiroft (all in Iranian Kerman), Rahman Dheri (in northwestern Pakistan), Mehrgarh and Nausharo (in Pakistani Baluchistan) and the more than 400 Dilmun seals of the Gulf used in early second millennium BC. *"It is clear that the inclusion of such restricted (but in their contexts presumably efficient) symbolic systems in their samples would have highlighted the non-comparability of the Indus script to such codes, thus lessening the impact of a good part of the Authors' [i.e., Farmer et al.] arguments. This is why, I believe, these systems were not considered. It is also clear that in the known contemporary systems, non-linguistic symbols behaved quite variably, and that archaeological data question the superficial claim that positional regularities are easily found in 'countless non-linguistic sign systems',"* concludes Vidale.

Why Did the Harappans not Adopt Writing?

"The critical question remains of why the Harappans never adopted writing, since their trade classes and presumably their ruling elite were undoubtedly aware of it through their centuries of contact with the high-literate Mesopotamians" (Farmer et al. 2004: 44).

That the Harappans should have intentionally rejected writing like the Celtic priests of Roman times, being averse to encode their ritual traditions in writing like the Vedic Brahmins (p. 44), is not an overwhelmingly convincing explanation. It is true that some complex socie-

ties did prosper without writing, for example the Incan empire which instead used a system of knotted strings (p. 47; Lawler 2004: 2029). But writing has been a most effective tool of administration, and the Indus script was created in the transitional period as part of a thorough reorganization of the Harappan culture, which included also standardization of weights and measures and led to the expansion and 500 years' duration of the Mature Harappan Civilization over a million square kilometers. The Harappans are not likely to have committed long literary texts to writing, and may have restricted themselves to recording economic transactions and other administrative affairs (as was done, for example, in Mycenaean Greece).

Pointers to a Writing System in the Indus Texts

One of the first testimonies of phonetic writing in Egypt is the famous palette of Narmer (c. 3050 BCE). Above the head of the king, who smites his enemy with a mace, is depicted the façade of his palace inside which are depicted a 'catfish' and an 'awl'. These signs, placed in the picture like the iconographic symbols of Mesopotamia, identify the king, but on a linguistic basis. Through the rebus or picture puzzle principle, the pictograms supply the phonetic values *n'r* and *mr*, respectively, yielding the king's name Narmer.[16)]

Both in Mesopotamia[17)] and in Egypt the application of the rebus principle meant a breakthrough in the creation of language-based writing. The signs used in writing were standardized and written in regular lines following the order of spoken words and sounds.

That the Indus signs form a standardized system and that the signs are written in regular lines are very important pointers to a language-based writing. But the most important characteristic of the Indus texts in this respect becomes evident if we do not limit their consideration to single inscriptions, as Farmer et al. do. This is the fact that the Indus signs form a very large number of regularly repeated sequences. The

16) Cf., e.g., Gardiner 1957: 7; Ray 1986; Ritner 1996: 73.

17) Cf. Michalowski 1996: 35; Cooper 1996: 42.

signs do not occur haphazardly, but follow certain rules. Some signs are limited to the end of a sequence, even when such a sequence occurs in the middle of an inscription, while other signs are usually found in the beginning of a sequence, some others are never found there, and so on.

It must be admitted that it is very difficult to construct even parts of the Indus grammar on this basis.[18] Nevertheless, the positional sequences can be profitably exploited to analyse the Indus texts syntactically, to define the textual junctures, and to classify the signs into phonetically or semantically similar groups. Such analyses can be carried out with automated methods.[19] Data accumulated in this way will certainly be useful in decipherment once a decisive breakthrough has been achieved — in other words when the language has been identified and some signs have been read phonetically in a convincing manner. But analyses of this kind are themselves unlikely to provide that breakthrough.

Conclusion

Perishable archaeological material being involved, and taking into consideration the very limited amount of surviving monumental art, negative evidence is not sufficient to prove wrong the hypothesis that the Harappans wrote on palm leaves or on cloth. Richard Sproat, the computer linguist of the Farmer team, admits that by statistical means it is not possible to distinguish a logo-syllabic script of the Mesopotamian type from non-linguistic symbol systems.[20] The question of whether the Indus signs are script or not, ultimately depends on whether one can

18) Cf. Parpola 1994: 86–97.

19) See Parpola 1994: 97–101.

20) My colleague Kimmo Koskenniemi, who is Professor of Computer Linguistics at the University of Helsinki and has participated in research on the Indus script, asked by e-mail Dr. Richard Sproat the following question: *"It appears that we agree that plain statistical tests such as the distribution of sign frequencies and plain reoccurrences can (a) neither prove that the signs represent writing, (b) nor prove that the signs do not represent writing. Falsifying being equally impossible as proving. But, do I interpret you correctly?"* In an e-mail sent to Kimmo Koskenniemi on Wednesday 27 April 2005, Dr. Sproat answered to this question with one word: *"Yes."*

demonstrate that the language-based rebus principle was utilized. Demonstrating this successfully will actually amount to a partial decipherment. The material presently available will not, in my opinion, allow a full decipherment, or one covering most texts.

Screening and developing ideas rashly published in the first flush of enthusiasm in 1969, I have in 1994 presented coherent interpretations of more than twenty Indus signs. These interpretations based on the hypothesis that the underlying language is Proto-Dravidian are in accordance with the generally accepted theories of script and decipherment and make sense within the framework of the Indus Civilization and Indian cultural history. My main concern has been to find different ways to check the interpretations. One basic goal has been to achieve internal control comparable to that applied in solving crossword puzzles. I have targeted especially signs that come together in ligatures (complex signs formed by combining two or more simple signs or sign elements) or signs that together constitute compound words. If both signs of a potential compound can be interpreted, the result is controlled externally by checking whether such a compound is actually attested in the known vocabulary of Dravidian languages. Semantically the results should make sense in their historical context, and at best they might even solve old problems. Personally I am convinced that this approach is correct, because it has been possible to go on expanding these interpretations systematically. I trust that the end of the road has not yet been reached, although the available material sets severe restrictions.

Without caring to demonstrate in detail what is wrong with these specific interpretations,[21] Farmer and his colleagues dismiss them off-

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21) I expect detailed criticism which points out specific faults in theory or in factual data. In the present case the rules are very few indeed, in accordance with the generally accepted theory, and do not change from case to case but are the same throughout, so I refuse to accept the implication that the general criticism leveled against all attempts (including that of Hrozný) applies here too: *"by exploiting the many degrees of freedom in the ways that speech maps to scripts, it is possible by inventing enough rules as you go to generate half-convincing pseudo-decipherments of any set of ancient signs into any language — even when those signs did not encode language in the first place. The absurdity of this*

hand in one single phrase, speaking of *"the failure of the Dravidian model to generate verifiable linguistic readings of a single Indus sign"* (Farmer et al. 2004: 21). I do not find this quite fair, as the rebus interpretations have such a pivotal importance for the question of whether the Indus signs are script or not, and as many reviewers and other scholars have taken my 1994 book very seriously. But being an involved party, the matter is of course not for me to decide. I am all the more grateful to the Tōhō Gakkai for this opportunity to present some of the interpretations to this distinguished audience (Comment: the printed paper is addressed to the readers, no more to the listening audience).[22] My main purpose here is to give an idea of the methods and controls.

Evidence for Writing and Dravidian Language

Obstacles to Decipherment

How can the Indus script be deciphered? We must turn to successful decipherments of ancient scripts and to the known history of writing for methodological guidance. Becoming acquainted with decipherments of other ancient scripts, one also becomes conscious of the immense obstacles in the case of the Indus script.

Most ancient scripts have been deciphered with the help of translations into known scripts and languages. But here no such translations exist. Even worse, historical information, such as was available from the Bible and the Greek historians in the case of the Persian cuneiform, is

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method only becomes obvious when it is extended to large bodies of inscriptions, and the number of required rules reaches astronomical levels; hence the tendency of claimed decipherments to provide only 'samples' of their results, prudently restricting the number of rules to outwardly plausible levels." (Farmer et al. 2004: 20f.). The small number of interpretations in my case simply results from the limitations of the available material, which does not allow any extensive decipherment.

22) For detailed documentation and illustrations, I refer to my earlier publications (Parpola 1994; 1997). As I will not be discussing the study of the Indus script in all its aspects, I would like to make a reference also to relevant chapters of various recent books: Robinson 1995: 144–148; 2002: 264–295; Kenoyer 1998: 68–79; McIntosh 2002: 140–155; Possehl 1996; 2002: 127–139; Rogers 2005: 201–203.

almost totally missing. The script was forgotten long before the earliest preserved literary records of South Asia were composed, so the later Indian sources tell us nothing about the Indus Civilization.

The Indus script is not closely and obviously related with any other known writing system which could help defining the phonetic values of the Indus signs. In addition, several further facts make the problem of the Indus script unusually difficult to tackle. As already stated, all surviving texts are very short — even the longest text is merely 26 signs. This means that we probably have no complete sentences but mostly just noun phrases. There are no clearly distinguishable word dividers, which have been of great help in the analysis of for instance the Aegean scripts. And though numerous signs are clearly pictographic, many are so simplified that it is virtually impossible to understand what they depict.

No wonder, then, that after about one hundred published attempts at deciphering the Indus script, the problem remains unsolved — that at least is the general verdict.[23)] Why have these attempts failed? Very often the material has been manipulated in unacceptable ways to fit preconceived ideas. Apart from this, the most popular method has been to equate Indus signs with similar-looking signs of other, readable scripts, and to read the Indus signs with their phonetic values. This method, however, works only when the scripts compared are closely related, and even then there are pitfalls. It is true that some Indus signs have close formal parallels in other ancient scripts. For example, the Indus sign looking like a mountain can be compared with signs occurring in Sumerian, Egyptian, Hittite and Chinese scripts. But each of these parallel signs represents a different language and has a different phonetic value, even if the meaning is the same or similar.

Methodology

What, then, is sound methodology? Some preparatory tasks have proved

23) Cf. Possehl 1996; Robinson 2002: 264–295.

useful in the decipherment of all kinds of scripts. They include collecting all available texts into a comprehensive and reliable text edition. In the case of the Indus script, the texts are being published both in photographs and in standardized, computer-drawn form.[24] Concordances systematically recording all occurrences of individual signs and their sequences in the texts, and various other kinds of statistics have been prepared.[25] Compilation of a reliable sign list, which distinguishes between distinct signs and their merely graphical variants, belongs to the most fundamental tasks.[26] All these tasks are interrelated and affect each other, and revisions are required.

Fundamentally, there are two principal unknowns to be tackled in the decipherment of any ancient script, namely the script type and the underlying language or languages.

The Language Problem

The language problem is most crucial. If the language of the Indus script belonged to a language family not known from other sources, the Indus script can never be deciphered. Compare the case of Etruscan: though written in an easily read alphabetic script, this isolated language is not much understood beyond the texts covered by copious translations. But as the Harappan population numbered around one million, there is a fair chance that traces of the language(s) have survived in the extensive Vedic texts composed by Indo-Aryan speakers who came to the Indus Valley from Central Asia during the second millennium BCE.

Aryan languages have been spoken in the Indus Valley ever since, but an Aryan language could not have been spoken by large numbers of Mature Harappan people. The culture reflected in the Ṛgvedic hymns is quite dissimilar from the Indus Civilization. Particularly important is

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24) For the first two volumes of the *Corpus of Indus Seals and Inscriptions*, see Joshi & Parpola 1987; Shah & Parpola 1991. The third volume is due to appear shortly.

25) For the time being, see Mahadevan 1977; Koskenniemi & Parpola 1979–1982.

26) For the present, see Parpola 1994: 68–82. Bryan Wells is preparing a new sign list as his Ph. D. thesis (Wells 1998 is his M. A. thesis on the same topic).

the fact that the domesticated horse has played an important role in the culture of the Indo-Iranian speakers, and there is no unambiguous evidence for the presence of *Equus caballus* in South Asia before the second millennium BCE.[27]

While various minority languages are very likely to have been spoken in the Greater Indus Valley,[28] there appears to have been only one written language. The sign sequences of the Indus texts are uniform throughout their area of distribution in South Asia.

The argument is reinforced by the fact that some of the Indus seals found in the Near East contain typical Indus signs and sequences — this concerns especially the square seals most common in South Asia — while on some other Indus seals — especially the round seals similar to those of the Gulf and Elamite culture, and the cylinder seals of the Mesopotamian type — have common Indus signs but in sequences completely dissimilar from those occurring on native Harappan texts. Statistically, one would expect that the most frequently attested sign (the occurrences of which constitute almost 10% of the Indus texts) would very often be found next to itself, but this is never the case in the Indus Valley. The combination is attested on a round seal probably found in Mesopotamia, which contains only frequently occurring signs of the Indus script, but in unique sequences.

This suggests that Harappans residing in the Near East had adopted the local language(s) which differed from the Indus language. The cuneiform texts speak not only of a distant country called Meluḫḫa, which most scholars identify with the Greater Indus Valley, but also of

27) For the horse, cf. Meadow 1991; Meadow & Patel 1997. For the prehistory of the Aryan languages and their introduction to South Asia, see now Carpelan & Parpola 2001; Parpola 2002a; 2002b (for the Aryan affinity of the Dāsa language); 2004 [2005]; 2005; Kochhar 2000; Driem 2001: II, 1070–1103.

28) Cf. Kuiper 1991: 89–96 for a list of 383 "foreign words in the Rigvedic language"; Lubotsky 2001; Parpola 2002a: 92–94; and Witzel 2003 [2004] for the original non-Indo-European language of the Bactria and Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC); for the Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Burman and Burushaski languages, cf. Parpola 1994: 142 and van Driem 1999; 2001: I, 295–297; 421–433; II, 1202f.

Meluḫḫa people who resided for generations in southern Mesopotamia. According to its inscription, one Old Akkadian cylinder seal belonged to *"Su-ilishu, interpreter of the Meluḫḫan language."* Thus the Meluḫḫan language did differ from the languages commonly spoken and understood in the ancient Near East, above all Sumerian, Akkadian and Elamite. The Harappan trade agents who resided in the Gulf and in Mesopotamia became bilingual, adopted local habits and local names, and wrote their names in the Indus script for the Harappans to read.

Historically the most likely candidate for the written majority language of the Harappans is Proto-Dravidian. The 26 members of the Dravidian language family are now mainly spoken in Central and South India. However, one Dravidian language, Brahui, has been spoken in Baluchistan for at least a thousand years, as far as the historical sources go.[29] Even areal linguistics of South Asia supports the hypothesis that the Indus language belonged to the Dravidian family. The retroflex consonants, which constitute the most diagnostic feature of the South Asian linguistic area, can be divided into two distinct groups, and one of these groups is distributed over the Indus Valley as well as the Dravidian-speaking areas.[30] Most importantly, numerous loanwords and even structural borrowings from Dravidian have been identified in Sanskrit texts composed in northwestern India at the end of the second and first half of the first millennium BCE, before any intensive contact between North and South India. External evidence thus suggests that the Harappans most probably spoke a Dravidian language.[31] Tools for reconstructing Proto-Dravidian are available.[32]

Clarifying the Type of Script

From the history of writing we know that the writing systems of the world have evolved historically and stagewise, in three successive steps.

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29) Cf. Elfenbein 1987, and Parpola 1994: 160–167.

30) Cf. Tikkanen 1999.

31) Cf. also e.g., Driem 2001: II, 1012–1038; Rogers 2005: 203.

32) See Burrow & Emeneau 1984; Krishnamurti 2003, with further references.

We can ask if the script is logo-syllabic (in which the signs represent complete words or syllables), syllabic (in which the signs almost exclusively have a syllabic value), or alphabetic (in which the signs represent separate phonemes, in the oldest scripts of this type mainly consonants)? The main criteria that can be used to define the type are the number of distinct signs, the word length measured in the number of signs, and the age of the script.

In the Indus script, the number of known signs is around 400, with about 200 basic elements. This number corresponds fairly well to the number actively used in logo-syllabic scripts at one time; it is too high for the script to be syllabic or alphabetic. Word divisions are not marked, but there is a good number of inscriptions comprising only one, two or three signs, and many of the longer ones can be subdivided into such units. In logo-syllabic scripts, one to three signs is a very typical word length, but in syllabic and alphabetic scripts, many words are much longer.

As to the age of the Indus script, the Mature Harappan phase, in which the fully developed Indus script was used, is assumed to have started between 2600–2500 BCE. A baked seal impression and a potsherd with short inscriptions that include the most frequently attested sign of the Indus script were recently excavated at Harappa. They suggest that the Indus script was created during the last phase of the Early Harappan period, between 2800–2600 BCE. Inspiration, restricted to the basic principle of logo-syllabic writing, is likely to have come from the Proto-Elamite script (c. 3100–2900 BCE), which was widely used on the Iranian Plateau.[33] The creators of the Indus script seem to have mainly resorted to traditional local symbols of the Greater Indus Valley.

The Indus script is thus much older than the earliest known syllabic scripts, the Eblaite cuneiform of Syria and the Linear Elamite of Susa, which date from around 2350 and 2250 BCE respectively. The earliest

33) Cf. Driem 2001: II, 998–1000.

alphabet was created c. 1600 BCE. The syllabic and alphabetic systems came into being as simplifications of the logo-syllabic scripts used in Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Thus all three criteria agree in suggesting that the Indus script belongs to the logo-syllabic type. The prospects and methods of deciphering such a script without translations differ in some essential respects from those of syllabic and alphabetic scripts. The syllabaries and alphabets form closed systems that cover the entire phonology of the language, and can be decoded as a systemic whole.

In logo-syllabic scripts, there are many more signs and variables to take into account, and the phonetic bond between the signs is weaker. There is no chance of building phonetic grids of the kind invented and realized in the decipherment of the Linear B. A complete phonetic decipherment of the Indus script is not possible with presently available materials. We can only hope for a partial phonetic decipherment covering individual signs. But to reach even this limited goal we need a valid method and good starting points.

The Rebus Principle and Its Implications

If it can be recognized from its outward shape what a pictographic sign represents,[34] this gives its "pictorial meaning." Contextual clues may suggest what a particular sign in a particular context approximately meant; this "intended meaning" may or may not have been the same as the pictorial meaning. If the pictorial and intended meanings of a particular sign can both be determined, and they turn out to be identical, this strengthens the assumed shared meaning, but yields no phonetic reading. But if the two meanings differ, they may be connected by homophony. Logo-syllabic scripts used rebus puns, which are language-specific and can thus identify the Indus language.

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34) As noted above, comparison of similar-looking signs of other ancients scripts. and non-linguistic symbol systems! — is very useful for determining the pictorial (iconic) meaning of the Indus signs.



(Fig. 1)

The outward shape of the U- or V-shaped Indus sign suggests 'pot' as its "pictorial meaning." A contextual clue suggests that the "intended meaning" also is 'vessel', or more exactly 'sacrificial or offering vessel'. The iconographic scene accompanying an inscription where this sign is preceded by a number, shows a human being who extends a similarly shaped pot towards a sacred tree in front of which he or she is kneeling (see Fig. 1).[35] Here the intended meaning of the sign appears to be the same as its pictorial meaning, and it can be understood directly, without any linguistic postulations. We need not know what the object was called in the original language to understand the sign.

But a sign is not fully deciphered as long as its ancient pronunciation has not been recovered. In logo-syllabic scripts, a sign can stand for the thing that it depicts, as well as for any other thing which has the same phonetic value. The use of this rebus principle is necessary particularly when abstract concepts have to be expressed. Homophony in the form of puns undoubtedly played a role in folklore long before it was utilized in writing. Importantly, puns usually are language-specific: we have a chance to identify the language that underlies the Indus script and to recognize the phonetic value of the sign(s) involved only in those cases, where the rebus principle has been applied.

35) Cf. M-478 A and M-479 A in Joshi & Parpola 1987: 115.

A Case for the Rebus: The 'Fish' Signs of the Seal Texts

The function of an inscribed artifact provides one of the most important clues to the general meaning of its text. The vast majority of the Indus texts are seals or sealings. Impressions of cloth, strings and other packing material on the reverse of tags with seal impressions indicate that the Harappan seals were used to control economic administration and trade.[36] One such clay tag stamped with an Indus seal has been found in Mesopotamia, where seals were used in the same way. The historical contact with the Near East makes it highly probable that the Indus seal inscriptions also chiefly contain proper names of persons with or without their occupational or official titles and descent, as do the contemporaneous readable Mesopotamian seal inscriptions.

That the signs looking like a 'fish' have this pictorial meaning is certified by the Indus iconography, in which fish (both more naturalistic fish and fish looking exactly like the Indus sign) is placed in the mouth of a fish-eating alligator. The plain fish sign probably has the intended meaning 'fish' on Indus tablets that seem to mention offerings of one to four pots of fish. But although Mesopotamian *economic texts* often speak of fish, fish is never mentioned in Mesopotamian *seal inscriptions*. The 'fish' sign, both plain and modified with various diacritic additions, occurs so frequently on Indus seals that almost every tenth sign belongs to this group. This suggests that they denote something else than fish on the seals. A reasonable guess for the "intended meaning" is 'god', for names of gods are used to form Mesopotamian as well as later Hindu proper names of persons.

The most commonly used word for 'fish' in Dravidian languages is *mīn*, and this word was pronounced in Proto-Dravidian like the word *mīn* meaning 'star'. This homophonic meaning suits the expected meaning 'god', for in the Mesopotamian cuneiform script every name of a deity is marked as such by a prefixed sign depicting 'star' but meaning 'god'. Astronomy, including the use of a star calendar, played an important

36) Cf. Parpola 1986: 401–402; 1994: 113–114. My analyses are now being updated by Dennys Frenez (see Frenez and Tosi, in press).

role in Mesopotamia, and deeply influenced the religion: all the main gods were symbolized by particular stars or planets. The orientation of streets and buildings according to the cardinal directions in Harappan cities provides concrete evidence for the practice of astronomy, which, as the basis of time-reckoning, was an integral part of all early civilizations. In Hindu religion, too, stars and planets have important divinities as their 'overlords'. The domestic manuals of the Veda further prescribe that children should be given secret 'star names'. Thus it is not far-fetched to suppose that the 'fish' signs on the Indus seals could stand for Proto-Dravidian names of stars, used as symbols for gods and as parts of human proper names.



(Fig. 2)

There is some external evidence that supports this hypothetical rebus reading. The association of fish and star (based on the homophony between the two Proto-Dravidian words both pronounced *mīṉ*) seems to be reflected on Harappan painted pottery from Amri, where the motifs of fish and star co-occur. In the Near East, the star symbol distinguished divinities even in pictorial representations. A seal from Mohenjo-daro (M-305, see Fig. 2) depicts an Indus deity with a star on either side of his head in this Near Eastern fashion.

A Numeral Sign + 'Fish'

Assuming that the language underlying the Indus script is Dravidian, it is difficult to avoid certain readings and conclusions. Long ago, Father Henry Heras suggested that the plain fish sign is to be read as *mīn*. This reading has been proposed by Russian students of the Indus script as

well as by myself. But our agreement is not limited to this, it comprises also the sequences in which the plain fish sign is preceded by a numeral sign. The numerals belong to those few Indus signs whose function and meaning can be deduced with fair certainty, partly from the fact that they consist of groups of vertical strokes, which is the way numerals are represented in many ancient scripts, partly from their mutual interchangeability before (i.e., to the right of)[37] specific signs, including the plain 'fish'. The sequence '6' + 'fish' yields the Old Tamil name of the Pleiades, *aṟu-mīṉ*, literally '6 stars'.

'7' + 'fish' corresponds to the Old Tamil name of the Ursa Major, *eḻu-mīṉ*. This sequence forms the entire inscription in one large seal from Harappa. This seal can be compared to the large dedicatory seals presented to divinities in Mesopotamia, for the stars of Ursa Major are since Vedic times identified with the ancient "Seven Sages." These mythical ancestors of priestly clans play a very important role in Indian mythology, including myths related to the origins of the phallic linga cult, which seems to originate in the Harappan religion. The Seven Sages moreover have a counterpart in the Seven Sages of the Mesopotamian religion: both groups are said to have survived the mythical flood.

A 'Fish' Sign with Diacritics

But even non-numeral attributes of the 'fish' signs can be interpreted systematically from the same premises. Among the diacritical marks added to the basic 'fish' sign to form compound signs is one placed over the 'fish' sign. It looks like a 'roof'. The most widespread root for words denoting 'roof' in Dravidian languages is **vay*- / **vey*- / **mey*- 'to cover a house with a thatched roof'. In Proto-Dravidian **vey*- / **mey*- 'to roof' was thus nearly homophonous with the root **may*- 'black'. The compound Indus sign consisting of the pictures of 'roof' and 'fish' can be read as **mey-mīn* 'roof-fish' in the sense of **may-mīn* 'black star'. What

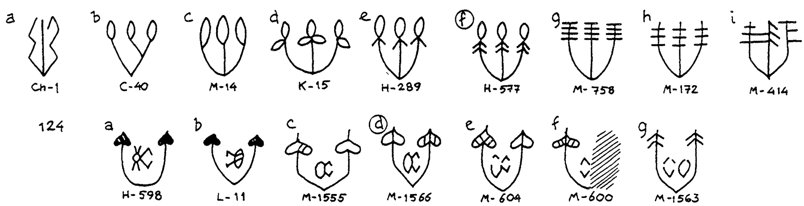
37) Right to left is the normal direction of writing in the Indus script. Seal stamps were carved in mirror image, so the normal writing direction is in the seal impressions.

makes this reading really significant is that the compound *mai-m-mīn* 'black star' is actually attested as the name of the planet Saturn in Old Tamil.[38] Such a name is natural for Saturn, a dim planet.

But Saturn is also a slow planet. For this reason it is usually called *śani* or *śanaiścara* 'slowly-going' in Sanskrit. In the iconography of both the Buddhists and the Jains, the planet Saturn rides the proverbially slow turtle. The association may well go back to Harappan times, for the pictogram depicting a fish with a roof over it could symbolize the planet Saturn not only phonetically but even pictorially, through his vehicle, that is, the turtle, which is an aquatic animal (i.e., a kind of 'fish') covered with a shell (i.e., a kind of roof)!

The Banyan Tree and the North Star

On the seals M-172 and M-414, the plain fish sign is preceded by a sign which has several variant forms in the Indus texts (see Fig. 3). Their comparison with the motifs of Early Harappan painted pottery suggests that this pictogram represents a fig tree. Except when combined with another sign ('crab'), which is placed inside it omitting the central 'branch', the tree is shown as three-branched, just as on the painted pottery. In the combined sign, the branches end in fig leaves as on the painted pottery, but in the variants of the basic sign the branches seem to bear either fig fruits or simplified fig leaves, or hanging aerial roots, or both.



(Fig. 3)

38) Cf. Puṟanāṉūṟu 117.

Rope-like air-roots are characteristic of the banyan tree or *Ficus indica*. One of the Sanskrit names for this tree, *vaṭa*, indeed seems to be derived from the Proto-Dravidian word *vaṭam* 'rope, cord'. As a name of the banyan tree, *vaṭam* appears to be short for the compound *vaṭa-maram*, or 'rope-tree', which is attested in Tamil. This Dravidian etymology for *vaṭa* makes it possible to find a Dravidian homophone fitting the above assumed astral context where the 'fig' pictogram is followed by the 'fish' sign.

In the Purāṇa texts written in Sanskrit the banyan fig is the tree of the northern direction. Why? Proto-Dravidian had another, homophonous word *vaṭa*, which means 'north'; but there is no such linguistic association between 'banyan' and 'north' in Indo-Aryan languages. The compound consisting of the signs for 'fig tree' and 'fish' thus yields the compound *vaṭa-mīn* 'north star'. This compound is actually attested in Old Tamil literature, as the name of the tiny star Alcor in the constellation of Ursa Major. In Sanskrit this star is called Arundhatī and it is supposed to represent the faithful wife of Vasiṣṭha, one of the Seven Sages with which the constellation Ursa Major is associated. This star is to be shown to the bride in the marriage ceremony according to both Vedic and Old Tamil texts. It is likely that originally *vaṭa-mīn* denoted the nearby pole star (Thuban, the 'immobile' center of the rotating heavens in 3000 BCE). The Sanskrit name of the pole star is *dhruva* 'fixed, firm, immovable, constant', and the pole star is also shown to the bride as an exemplar to be emulated.

The Purāṇa texts contain an interesting conception about the pole star, which seems to be explained by its Dravidian name *vaṭa-mīn*. In reply to the question, why the stars and planets do not fall down from the sky, these heavenly bodies are said to be bound to the pole star with invisible 'ropes of wind'. These 'ropes' seem to refer to the air-roots of the cosmic banyan tree, which God Varuṇa is said to hold up in the sky in the earliest Indian text dating from c. 1000 BCE,[39] a conception

39) Cf. Ṛgveda 1,24,7.

naturally following from Dravidian *vaṭa-mīn* 'north star' = 'banyan star' = 'rope star'.

The 'Crab' Sign

We can try to verify this interpretation by attempting to understand the sign sometimes inserted in the middle of the 'fig' sign, omitting the central one of its three branches. The said sign occurs more than 125 times as a separate grapheme. It seems to depict a 'crab', mostly simplified to a round body with claws, but sometimes with feet added. That the signs with feet are allographs of those without feet is indicated by the presence of this variation even when combined with the 'fig' sign, while the identity of these combined variants can be seen from the similarity of the context in two seals, one from Harappa (H-598), the other from Lothal (L-11).

The clear emphasis laid on the claws makes it likely that the sign expresses the concept of 'grasping' or 'seizing', for the crab is consistently associated with 'grasping' in Indian folklore. In the Baka- and Kakkaṭa-Jātaka, the crab's claws are compared with the pincers of a smith. The same comparison is found in Old Tamil texts,[40] where the verbal root *koḷ* 'to seize, grasp, take' is used of the crab's 'seizing' with its claws,[41] while the Pāli and Sanskrit texts use the semantically corresponding root *grah-* and its cognates, related to English *grab*.

In the Indus texts, the 'crab' sign usually occurs in the immediate vicinity of the 'fish' signs assumed to denote stars and planets. It might therefore stand for Proto-Dravidian *kōḷ* 'seizure' (from the verbal root *koḷ* 'to seize'), which refers to planets and eclipse demons.[42] In Indian folk religion, the planets are believed to 'seize' people and make them sick.

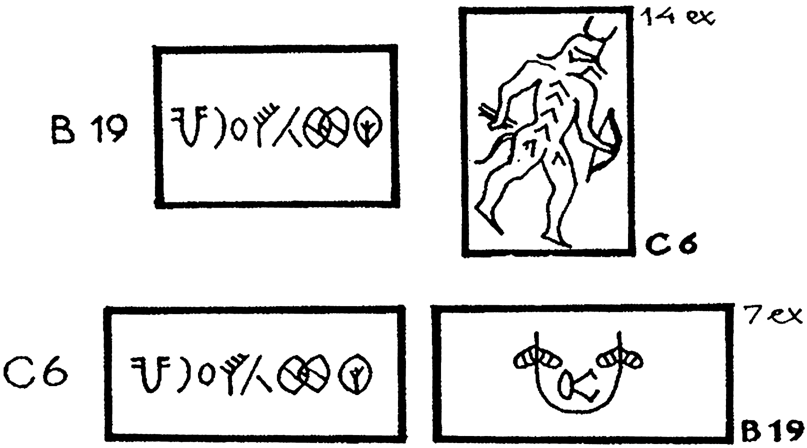
Instead of *kōḷ* 'planet', a synonymous compound, *kōṇ-mīṉ* (with *ḷ* changed into *ṇ* before the following *m*), 'seizing star', is used in several

40) Cf. Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai 206–208.
41) Cf. Naṟṟiṇai 35; Ainkuṟunūṟu 27.
42) Cf. Puṟanāṉūṟu 260.

Old Tamil texts.[43] It is remarkable that not only does the sign combination 'crab' + 'fish' (corresponding to the Tamil compound *kōṇ-mīṉ*) occur three times in the Indus inscriptions, but the identity of the subsequent sequence in two parallel inscriptions (M-57 and M-387) suggests that this combination, 'crab' + 'fish', is synonymous with the plain 'crab' sign, as is Tamil *kōṇ-mīṉ* with *kōḷ*.

The Combination of 'Crab' and 'Fig'

The interpretation of the 'crab' sign can be further checked by examining its combination with the 'fig' sign. The 'fig' + 'crab' ligature is among the few Indus signs for which the copper tablets of Mohenjodaro function as 'semi-bilinguals', mediating their intended meaning visually, through an iconographic image. The copper tablets constitute a rare category of objects with a clear interdependence between the inscription on the obverse and the iconographic motif on the reverse. This is certified by the existence of numerous duplicates, forming sets of identical tablets. In some sets, an isolated sign on the reverse has the same inscription on the obverse as an animal or human-shaped icono-



(Fig. 4)

43) Ciṟupāṇāṟṟuppaṭai 242–4; Puṟanāṉūṟu 392,17; Paṭṭiṉappālai 67–68.

graphic motif in another set. This seems to mean that the isolated sign stands for the name of the divinity depicted through the iconographic motif. The 'fig' + 'crab' ligature is thus equated with a male figure armed with bow and arrows, anthropomorphic apart from having a bull's horns and tail, and with long eyes.

In the Near Eastern scripts, an inserted sign often functions as a semantic or phonetic determinative. If this is the case here, the 'crab' sign could indicate that the 'fig' sign is not to read with its usual phonetic value as *vaṭa* 'banyan tree'. The meaning 'fig' is retained, but the phonetic shape of the word is similar to that expressed by the 'crab' sign, i.e., *kōḷ*. Old Tamil, other South Dravidian languages and Tulu possess such a word: *kōḷi* 'banyan, pipal, all kinds of fig trees which bear fruit without outwardly blossoming, epidendron, grasping plant (some figs are of this nature)'. The meaning 'grasping plant' suggests its derivation from the Proto-Dravidian root *koḷ* 'to grasp, seize'.

But how can the word *kōḷi* be connected with the Harappan archer-god depicted on the copper tablets? Its basic meaning is 'grasping epiphytic fig', and in early Vedic texts such figs — which strangle their host trees and break buildings — are implored for help in crushing enemies. It is a fitting symbol for the war-god Skanda and his Vedic predecessor Rudra. Rudra has been suspected to descend from a Pre-Aryan deity. He is described as a cruel hunter and raider, who with the bow, his characteristic weapon, shoots arrows at cattle and people. Euphemistically, Rudra is called Śiva 'kind, benevolent' in the Veda. Another common name of Śiva is *Hara* 'seizer, taker, robber', which is likewise used of Rudra.[44] Sanskrit *Hara* could reflect the Dravidian word *kōḷ* 'seizure, taking, pillage, plunder, robbery', derived from *koḷ* 'to seize, take, rob'.

The word *kōḷi* in the sense of 'a fig tree which bears fruit without outwardly blossoming' must be compared also with Old Tamil *kōḷ* 'the act of bearing fruit'.[45] Both are derived from the root *koḷ* 'to take',

44) Cf. Āśvalāyana-Gṛhyasūtra 4, 8, 19.

45) Cf. Akanāṉūṟu 2,1; 162,19; 335,14; 382,10; 399,14.

which here has the same sense as the Sanskrit root *grabh-* in the Vedic phrase *óṣadhayaḥ phálaṃ gṛbhṇanti* 'the plants get (lit. take) fruit',[46] in the past participle *gṛbhītá-* 'fructified, fruit-bearing'.[47] And in *garbha* 'fruit, embryo'.[48] The ligature of 'fig' + 'crab' thus seems to express the deity even iconically: the 'seizing' / 'fructifying' deity or his 'embryo' is placed inside the fig tree, just as anthropomorphic deities are often depicted inside fig trees in the Indus glyptics. Particular attention may be drawn to such a deity with a goat's or ram's head, who seems to be the Harappan predecessor of the god Skanda in his goat- or ram-headed fertility aspect, Viśākha or Naigameṣa, whose cult is intimately connected with fig trees.

New Interpretations

A number of tentative interpretations not included in my book of 1994 have been presented elsewhere.[49] It is possible to propose some more readings that have reasonable credibility, so to label this line of approach abortive because it has stagnated and made no further progress is incorrect. I shall add one new interpretation here.

I have earlier suggested that the sign 'dot-in-circle' depicts 'eye', *kaṇ* in Dravidian. The sign could also stand for the corresponding verb, *kāṇ* 'to see'. Two such signs one after the other is a frequently occurring sequence in the Indus texts, which clearly forms a phrase. It can be matched with the Tamil compound *kaṇ-kāṇi* 'overseer'.[50] Another phrasal sequence ending in the 'eye' sign constitutes the entire inscription on a seal from Harappa (H-602), and the last two signs on several

46) Taittirīya-Saṃhitā 6, 3, 4, 3.

47) Said of the wood-apple tree in Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa 2,1.

48) Sanskrit *gárbha-* m. 'fruit, embryo' seems to result from a contamination of the root *grabh-* in this Dravidian-influenced meaning with Sanskrit *gárbha-* m. 'womb,' younger Avestan *gerᵊβa-* m. 'womb', from Proto-Indo-European **gʷolbh-o-* / **gʷelbh-*, cf. Greek *delphús* f. 'womb'.

49) Cf. Parpola 1997; 1999: 107f.; 2003: 555–560.

50) Cf. Parpola 1994: 215.

other seals.[51] The first sign in this sequence is 'two parallel curved or winding lines'[52] probably depicting 'river' or 'water', like the similar-looking sign of the archaic Sumerian script. The phrase corresponds to the Tamil compound *nīr-k-kaṇṭi* 'a village servant who looks to the distribution of water for irrigation'. Such an occupational title makes sense in the context of the Indus Civilization.[53] The proposed interpretation of the 'water' sign can be tested in several other contexts, but I will stop the examination here.

The self-imposed demand of verification makes me reluctant to propose Dravidian interpretations that cannot be supported by actual linguistic evidence, such as compounds attested in Dravidian languages. Suspected compounds may actually exist, or have existed, but limitations of our sources and dictionaries may make them inaccessible to researchers. Really ancient texts not much affected by Indo-Aryan exist only for a single Dravidian language, Old Tamil, and the vocabulary of most Dravidian languages, especially their compounds, is, generally speaking, still very incompletely recorded. Thus it is not only the Indus texts that are scanty and make progress difficult.

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51) Cf. H-396 and H-568 from Harappa and M-205 from Mohenjo-daro in Joshi & Parpola 1987 and Shah & Parpola 1991.

52) Sign no. 175 in Parpola 1994: 73.

53) Cf. Kenoyer 1998: 38; 42; 163; Possehl 2002: 35; 64f.

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Recent Adaptions of the Devanagari Script for the Tibeto-Burman Languages of Nepal[1]

Michael Noonan
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

1. INTRODUCTION: Most of Nepal's 120+ languages have no written tradition dating back more than a few years. When these previously unwritten languages come to be written for publication, which has been happening with some frequency since the promulgation of the new constitution in 1990, several practical problems arise, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Which dialect or dialects should be used for writing?
2. Within the chosen dialect(s), which variant forms should be selected for writing?
3. Which script should be used?
4. How should the chosen variants be spelled given the conventions inherent in the script?
5. How should the script and its conventions be adapted to accommodate the phonological system of the language?

In this paper, I will be concerned primarily with the last two problems, specifically with respect to the 100+ Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal and the attempts to write these languages with the Devanagari script. I will not attempt to survey all these languages; rather, I will report on six which have only recently come to be written with the Devanagari script: Chantyal, Gurung, Limbu, Sherpa, Tamang, and Thangmi.[2] These languages constitute a rough-and-ready sample of the Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal without a tradition of writing in the Devanagari script[3]: some are locally prominent languages with large numbers of speakers, others more obscure; some have traditions of writing in scripts other than Devanagari, others do not. For none of these languages is there a fully standardized orthography, and none of these languages has been written in the Devanagari script in any serious way until quite recently.

The goal of this paper is to examine the ways in which the Devanagari script has, and has not, been adapted to the phonologies of the six languages. I'll first discuss the orthographic histories of each language. I will then discuss the characteristics of the Devanagari script and the phonological system it is designed to accommodate. Then I will present brief sketches of the phonological inventories of the six languages, follow-

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[2] Chantyal, Gurung, and Tamang are all members of the Tamangic group, a fairly straightforward grouping with a time depth more or less comparable to that of the Romance languages. Sherpa is a member of the Tibetan Complex, relatively closely alligned to the Tamangic group within the Bodish subphylum. Limbu is a Kiranti language. Thangmi, though typologically similar to the Kiranti languages, is not closely related to them: it's closest relative is Baraam, and the two may be related to the Western Himalayish languages, such as those in the Kanauri group.

[3] Of the Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal, only Newari has a long-standing tradition of writing using the Devanagari script.

ing this with a discussion of how the script has — and has not — been adapted to accommodate these sound systems. I will then discuss the issue of 'superfluous graphemes', and finish up with some concluding remarks on how Devanagari has been — and could be — adapted for these languages.

2. HISTORY OF WRITING IN DEVANAGARI: In this section, I'll briefly discuss each of the six languages, sketching the history of writing in Devanagari for each and the controversies, where they have existed, over the choice of script. I will concentrate on publication rather than informal writing as might be found, for example, in personal correspondence. In any case, for most speakers of these languages, letter writing has until very recently been done exclusively through the medium of another language, usually Nepali, though Tibetan Buddhists might use Tibetan. The exclusive use of Nepali or Tibetan in literacy training coupled with the lack of established orthographic traditions for the languages of our sample has brought about and maintained this situation. With the exception of Limbu, it is only with the worldwide ethnic revival, a significant part of the Nepalese social and intellectual scene only since the 1970s, that writing in these languages has been considered a desideratum by significant numbers.

2.1 CHANTYAL: There were no publications in Chantyal until 1987, and indeed there have been no publications exclusively or even primarily in Chantyal save Bhulanja & Noonan (1995). That first publication in 1987 and the few publications which have appeared subsequently[4] have all used the Devanagari script. Unlike all the other languages discussed in this paper, there has been no discussion about the use of any other script for this language. Bhulanja & Noonan proposed spelling conventions for Chantyal, appended to a collection of children's stories that were distributed to schools in Chantyal-speaking villages. These conventions have not been observed in subsequent publications.

2.2 GURUNG: There have been advocates for four distinct scripts in recent years for Gurung (Glover 2002): the Tibetan script, particularly among Gurung Buddhists; the Khemaa lipi खेमाँ लिपि, an indigenous adaption of the Devanagari script; the roman script, advocated mostly by veterans of the British and Indian Gurkha regiments; and the Devanagari script. While the other scripts still have their adherents, Devanagari is clearly the script of choice for publication in Gurung.

There have been a significant number of publications in Gurung,[5] at least by the standards of Nepal's minority languages. Within the general conventions imposed by the Nepalese version of the Devanagari script, each author has felt free to invent his own spellings. Glover (2002) proposes a number of spelling conventions for Gurung publications, in particular those that might be used for a forthcoming Gurung-Nepali-English dictionary. A number of these proposals will be discussed below.

[4] Chhantyal (2044 [1987], 2051 [1994]), Bhulanja & Noonan (1995), Nepal Chhantyal Shangha (2001), *Chhantyal* magazine.

[5] For example, D. Gurung (2052 [1995]), P. Gurung (1997), R. Gurung (1998), Tamu (1996). The Glover, Glover & Gurung (1977) dictionary has a Nepali-Gurung index in Devanagari script.

2.3 LIMBU: Limbu has a script of its own, known as the *Sirijonga* script, which has been in use since at least the early 19th century. The script has undergone a number of revisions over the last century and is now used in schools in Sikkim, where Limbu is taught as a vernacular language subject in Limbu-speaking areas, and for publications in Limbu printed in Nepal. Despite the pride many Limbus feel for the Sirijonga script [which, incidentally, has a Unicode encoding], the Devanagari script is still used for Limbu due to the fact that Limbus are bilingual in Nepali and achieve familiarity with Devanagari at state schools which are run exclusively in the national language. Nonetheless, the Sirijonga script seems to be gaining ground. In any case, one consequence of the existence of an alternative script which is reasonably well adapted to the peculiarities of Limbu is that when the Devanagari script is used for Limbu, its deficiencies for representing Limbu phonology are evident to writers of the language. The Unicode now has coding for a glottal stop for the Devanagari script largely because of pressure from those who wished to use the Devanagari script for writing Limbu.

2.4 SHERPA: Until recently, Sherpa was written mostly in the Tibetan script, usually with Classical Tibetan spellings. Recent publications though are likely to be in the Devanagari script. There is a weekly newspaper, numerous teach-yourself Sherpa texts using Devanagari in varying degrees, and an online dictionary[6], along with some literary publications. An informal standard has been emerging using more-or-less standard Nepali orthographic conventions and thus failing to fully accommodate the phonological structure of the language.

2.5 TAMANG: Tamang has come to be written only recently. Almost all publication has been in the Devanagari script[7], though there are vocal advocates in the Tamang community for the Tibetan script, including a simplified version of the script referred to as *Tamyig*. Martine Mazaudon, at the invitation of the Tamang community, prepared a paper [Mazaudon 1993] discussing ways in which the Devanagari and Tibetan scripts could be adapted so as to accurately transcribe Tamang's phonemic distinctions. Recent publications do not appear to have made use of her suggestions, however.

2.6 THANGMI: As of this writing, there appears to have been only one publication of any sort in the Thangmi language: a Nepali-Thangmi-English dictionary prepared by Mark Turin and Bir Bahadur Thami [Turin & Thami 2003], using Devanagari script for the Thangmi entries, with conventions worked out by Turin in consultation with members of the Thangmi community.

3. THE DEVANAGARI SCRIPT: In order to discuss how the Devanagari script might be adapted for the six languages under consideration in this paper, we first must consider the characteristics of the script itself. Since the characteristics of the Devanagari script are well known and well documented, it will suffice to provide only a brief description which will introduce some terms that will figure later in the discussion.

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[6] http://www.nepalresearch.org/

[7] The website http://www.tamangghedung.org/ contains a listing of publications in Tamang.

William Bright (1996) has characterized the script aptly as an *alphasyllabary*, a useful term describing an orthographic system which has graphemes for consonants and vowels [like an alphabet] but writes consonant-vowel combinations as units [like a syllabary], in which the vowel graph acts as a *diacritic* to the consonant graph.[8] When consonant graphs are written without a specific vowel graph, they are interpreted as representing a sequence of the consonant and an *inherent vowel*, often pronounced [ʌ] or [ɐ]. The inherent vowel is canceled when a vowel diacritic is present or when a special diacritic known as the *virāma* is added to the consonant graph, indicating that no vowel follows the consonant. Consonant clusters often require special allographs, often for the first consonant, sometimes for the second as well; some consonant clusters are completely irregular and require special graphs of their own. These special allographs are referred to as *conjunct* or *combining* forms. Vowel nasalization is indicated by means of a diacritic known as the *candrabindu*; homorganic nasals can be transcribed with the *anusvāra.*

The free-standing allographs of the vowels and the consonants [the latter being interpreted as followed by the inherent vowel] are given in (1).

(1) THE DEVANAGARI SCRIPT

CONSONANTS	Labial	Den-Alv	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Unaspirated Stop/affricate	प	त	ट	च	क	
Aspirated Stop/affricate	फ	थ	ठ	छ	ख	
Voiced Stop/affricate	ब	द	ड	ज	ग	
Murmured Stop/affricate	भ	ध	ढ	झ	घ	
Voiced Nasal Stop	म	न	ण	ञ	ङ	
Voiced Lateral Approximant		ल	ळ			
Voiced Tap Approximant		र				
Voiceless Fricative		स	ष	श		
Murmured voice [glottal fricative]						ह
Glide				य	व	

VOWELS: अ, आ, इ, ई, उ, ऊ, ए, ओ

DIPHTHONGS: ऐ, औ

SYLLABIC LIQUIDS: ऋ, ॠ, ऌ, ॡ

VISARGA <ḥ>: ः

NASALIZATION: ँ, ं

The *candrabindu* [or *anunāsika*] <ँ> is used to represent nasal vowels; the *anusvāra* <ं> is used to represent nasals homorganic to following consonants and sometimes nasal vowels. The *visarga* represents <ḥ>, but only syllable finally: its use is mostly restricted

[8] It is not the syllable as such, but rather an orthographic unit known as the *akṣara* (Bright 1996), which constitutes a basic unit within this orthographic system.

to Sanskrit and Sanskrit borrowings.[9] The retroflex lateral and the syllabic laterals are likewise restricted to Sanskrit and are exceedingly rare even there, but would likely be present in the typesetter's kit and therefore available to be called into service.

In (2) are summarized the phonological units that the script can — without additions, or modification and/or reinterpretation of the basic character set — represent phonemically. In the transcription used here, <^{h}> indicates aspiration, <ɦ> murmur.

(2) THE PHONOLOGICAL SYSTEM DIRECTLY REPRESENTED BY THE DEVANAGARI SCRIPT:

CONSONANTS:	Labial	Den-Alv	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Unaspirated Stop/affricate	p	t	ʈ	c	k	
Aspirated Stop/affricate	p^h	t^h	$ʈ^h$	c^h	k^h	
Voiced Stop/affricate	b	d	ɖ	j	g	
Murmured Stop/affricate	bɦ	dɦ	ɖɦ	jɦ	gɦ	
Voiced Nasal Stop	m	n	ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	
Voiced Lateral Approximant		l	ɭ			
Voiced Tap Approximant		r				
Voiceless Fricative		s	ʂ	ʃ		
Murmured voice [glottal fricative]						ɦ
Glide				y	w/v	

VOWELS:

i, i:, ĩ, ĩ:　　u, u:, ũ, ũ:
e, ẽ　　o, õ
ʌ, ʌ̃
a, ã

DIPHTHONGS:

ʌy, ʌ̃y　　ʌw, ʌ̃w
[other diphthongs can be written by juxtaposing vowel graphs]

SYLLABIC LIQUIDS:

r̥, r̥:　　l̥, l̥:

The character <ह> has a murmured pronunciation in Nepali, which is what is indicated in the chart. The *visarga* <ḥ>, representing [h], is not listed since its use is restricted to syllable-final position.

For some languages using the script, in particular Hindi, a subscript dot is used to indicate certain consonant sounds not otherwise represented by the script. These are listed in (3):

(3) क़ [qʌ], ख़ [xʌ], ग़ [ɣʌ], ज़ [zʌ], ड़ [ɽʌ], ढ़ [ɽɦʌ], फ़ [fʌ]

Finally, a few words should be said about the Devanagari script as used for writing Nepali. Nepali is the national language of Nepal and the language of public education

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[9] A few orthographies have put the *visarga* to other uses, *e.g.* Newari, which uses it to indicate vowel length. Note that in Sanskrit, the *visarga* represents voiceless [h], not murmured [ɦ], and thus the visarga is not an allograph of <h>, which is always murmured.

and of interethnic discourse. All Nepalis below the age of, say, 60 are effectively bilingual in Nepali, and to the extent that they are literate, they achieve literacy first in Nepali. As we will see, these facts have a considerable influence on the way that the Devanagari script has been used for the six languages under consideration here.

The sound system of Nepali is represented quite well by the Devanagari script. A few graphemes are superfluous in the sense that they represent potential phonological distinctions which are not made — or, in some cases, not normally made — when speaking Nepali. These include:

The distinction between the sibilant characters:

(4) श, ष, स *potentially* [ʃ], [ʂ], [s]

The sounds represented by these characters are occasionally distinguished by educated Nepalis, but are not ordinarily distinguished in casual speech.

The distinction between long and short <i> and <u>:

(5) इ, ई *and* उ, ऊ

The syllabic liquids and the retroflex lateral [the last found only in forms from Vedic Sanskrit]:

(6) ऋ, ॠ, ऌ, ॡ, ळ

The *anusvāra*, which is often used to write homorganic nasals:

(7) ं

The *visarga*, which, in any case, is found only in Sanskrit borrowings:

(8) ः

Many speakers of western dialects of Nepali fail to distinguish the dental and retroflex series, though these are distinguished in Standard Nepali and in the Nepali taught in the schools; the labiodental fricative and the bilabial stop are also not regularly distinguished.

The only sounds found in Nepali that have no dedicated characters in the traditional Devanagari script are the retroflex flaps [ɽ] and [ɽɦ]. Ordinarily, these are written with the characters for the voiced and murmured retroflex stops, though in a very few publications, mostly of a pedagogical nature, they may be written with the subscript dot beneath the retroflex stop characters, as in Hindi:

(9) ड़ [ɽ] ढ़ [ɽɦ]

There is only one orthographic innovation found in Nepali *vis-à-vis* other languages using the Devanagari script. This involves the *repha*, the combinatory form of the <r> grapheme. Before <y>, the *repha* is often written as in (10),

(10) ऱ्य /ryʌ/

rather than as in (11), the standard method for writing the <ry> sequence word-medially in Devanagari:

(11) र्य /ryʌ/

4. PHONOLOGICAL SYSTEMS OF THE SIX TIBETO-BURMAN LANGUAGES: Now we will discuss the six Tibeto-Burman languages that are the objects of this study. Below are charts

containing the phoneme sets of the six languages. In each chart, phonemes that would require unconventional representations in the Devanagari script, but which require no modification or reinterpretation of characters are placed within plain rectangles; phonemes which cannot be accommodated within the standard Devanagari script are placed within rectangles with double lines.

(12) CHANTYAL (Noonan 2003)

CONSONANTS:

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Unaspirated Stop/affricate	p	t	c	k	
Aspirated Stop/affricate	pʰ	tʰ	cʰ	kʰ	
Voiced Stop/affricate	b	d	j	g	
Murmured Stop/affricate	bɦ	dɦ	jɦ	gɦ	
Murmured Stop/affricate with Voiceless Onset	pɦ	tɦ	cɦ	kɦ	
Murmured Stop/affricate with Vl Asp Onset	thɦ		khɦ		
Voiced Nasal Stop	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	
Murmured Nasal Stop	mɦ	nɦ	ɲɦ		
Voiced Lateral Approximant		l			
Murmured Lateral Approximant		lɦ			
Voiced Tap Approximant		r			
Murmured Tap Approximant		rɦ			
Voiceless Fricative		s			
Murmured Fricative		sɦ			ɦ
Glide			y	w	
Murmured Glide			ɦy	ɦw	

VOWELS:

i, ĩ, u, ũ,
e, ẽ o, õ
ʌ, ʌ̃
a, ã

Murmur could be considered a tone or a property of syllables in Chantyal, but is represented here as a property of initial consonants (Noonan 2003). This corresponds to the intuitions of Chantyals, though in truth these intuitions may have been influenced by the conventions of the Devanagari script. In any case, in writing, Chantyals inevitably treat murmur as a property of the syllabic onset, as we shall see.

(13) GURUNG (Glover 1974, 2002)

	Labial	Den-Alv	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Unaspirated Stop/affricate	p	t	ʈ	c	k	
Aspirated Stop/affricate	pʰ	tʰ	ʈʰ	cʰ	kʰ	
Voiced Stop/affricate	b	d	ɖ	j	g	
Voiced Nasal Stop	m	n			ŋ	
Voiced Lateral Approximant		l				
Voiced Tap Approximant		r				
Voiceless Fricative		s, ɬ				
Murmured Fricative						ɦ

Glide				y	w

VOWELS:

i, ĩ u, ũ
e, e:, ẽ o, ɔ:, ɔ̃
a, ã
a:, ã:

TONES: four tones; two are murmured.

As in Chantyal, murmur may be associated with voiceless onsets and with resonant onsets. The length contrast in vowels is marginal except for the low vowels.

(14) LIMBU (Michailovsky 2002)

CONSONANTS:	Labial	Dental	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Unaspirated Stop/affricate	p	t	c	k	ʔ
Aspirated Stop/affricate	pʰ	tʰ	cʰ	kʰ	
Voiced Nasal Stop	m	n	ny	ŋ	
Voiced Lateral Approximant		l			
Voiced Tap Approximant		r			
Voiceless Fricatives		s			h
Glides			y	w	

VOWELS:

i, i:, iˀ u, u:, uˀ
e, eˀ o, oˀ
ɛ, ɛ:, ɛˀ ɔ, ɔ:, ɔˀ
a, a:, aˀ

Voiced consonants occur as positional variants of the voiceless consonants. The glottalized vowels are phonologically distinct from a vowel + glottal stop sequence, though phonetically they may not differ.

(15) SHERPA (Kelly 2003)

CONSONANTS:	Labial	Dent-Alv	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Unaspirated Stop/affricate	p	t, ts	ʈ	c	k	
Aspirated Stop/affricate	pʰ	tʰ, tsʰ	ʈʰ	cʰ	kʰ	
Voiced Stop/affricate	b	d	ɖ	j	g	
Voiced Nasal Stop	m	n		ɲ	ŋ	
Lateral Approximant		l, l̥				
Tap Approximant		r, r̥				
Voilcess Fricative		s		ʃ		
Murmured voice [glottal fricative]						ɦ
Glide				y	w	

VOWELS:

i u
e o
a ɒ

TONE: there are two phonemic tones

Kelly (2003) maintains that there are two tones and a contrast, among the low tone words, between those with and those without murmured vowels: *e.g.* /gò/ 'door' *vs* /gò̤/ 'head'. This, no doubt, reflects an old tonal contrast, harking back to the time when Sherpa had a four-tone system, with two murmured tones.[10]

(16) TAMANG (Mazaudon 1993, 2003)

	Labial	Den-Alv	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Unaspirated Stop/affricate	p	t	ʈ	c	k	
Aspirated Stop/affricate	pʰ	tʰ	ʈʰ	cʰ	kʰ	
Voiced Nasal Stop	m	n			ŋ	
Voiced Lateral Approximant		l				
Voiced Tap Approximant		r				
Voiceless Fricative		s				
Murmured Fricative						ɦ
Glide				y	w	

VOWELS:

i, ĩ, i:, ĩ: u, ũ, u:, ũ:
e, ẽ, e:, ẽ: o:, õ:, o, õ,
a, ã, a:, ã:

TONES: there are four tones; two are generally murmured

Phonetic voiced stops occur in Tamang intervocalically, and also initially with the two low tones.

(17) THANGMI (Turin 2003)

CONSONANTS:	Labial	Den-Alv	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Unaspirated Stop/affricate	p	t	ʈ	c	k	ʔ
Aspirated Stop/affricate	pʰ	tʰ	ʈʰ	cʰ	kʰ	
Voiced Stop/affricate	b	d	ɖ	j	g	
Murmured Stop/affricate	bɦ	dɦ	ɖɦ	jɦ	gɦ	
Voiced Nasal Stop	m	n	ɳ		ŋ	
Voiced Lateral Approximant		l				

[10] In any case, it would seem that there is a good deal of variation in the number of tonal contrasts in Sherpa: Kelly's two [or three] contrast with the four reported in Hale (1973) and by Schöttelndreyer (1973). Hildebrandt (2003) and Noonan (ms) discuss the reduction or outright disappearance of tonal distinctions in the Bodish languages Manange and Nar-Phu under areal pressure from Nepali.

Voiced Tap Approximant	r			
Voiceless Fricative	s			
Murmured voice [glottal fricative]				ɦ
Glide		y	w	

VOWELS:

i				u
	e		o	
		ʌ		
		a		

5. HOW THE SCRIPT HAS BEEN ADAPTED FOR THE SIX LANGUAGES: In this section I'll discuss the ways in which those phonological distinctions deemed problematic for the Devanagari script have been handled in published works in the six languages. Standardized orthographies utilizing the Devanagari script do not exist for any of the languages under consideration here, so I will report on the conventions used in published works that I have seen and on conventions proposed in works which discuss orthographic possibilities for individual languages.

I will not discuss orthographic conventions for diphthongs since the Devanagari script allows for the representation of diphthongs by the simple expedient of juxtaposing vowels: as long as the vowels can be written, the diphthongs they are found in can too.

In all, seven problematic phonological distinctions were uncovered in the last section: alveolar affricates, murmur, voiceless liquids, tone, vowel length, additional vowels, and the glottal stop. These will be discussed in turn.

5.1 ALVEOLAR AFFRICATES: Alveolar affricates contrast with alveopalatal affricates in Sherpa [and other languages in Nepal's Tibetosphere]. They are problematic orthographically only in the sense that they are considered unitary phonemes in these languages. In principle, there should be little difficulty writing the distinction in the Devanagari script: for example, त्स could be used for [tsʌ] and च for [tʃʌ]. In practice, the two series are written identically in all the samples of Sherpa that I've seen.[11]

The reason for this no doubt stems from the fact that the members of the 'palatal' series in Nepali have two allophones for many speakers: an alveolar affricate and an alveopalatal affricate. Since Sherpas do not distinguish the two series in Nepali, they similarly fail to distinguish the two in Sherpa, even though the means to do so is easily available.

5.2 MURMUR: Apart from the cases where murmur is a concomitant of tone, murmur can be accommodated quite well within the Devanagari script. In Chantyal, where murmured syllables have voiceless and resonant initials, murmur is transcribed

[11] See, for example, the dictionary and other Sherpa materials available at:
http://sherpa.nepalresearch.org/
The romanization distinguishes the two series, but the Devanagari transcription does not.

with the character <ह>, which in Nepali represents [ɦ] not [h]. The syllable initial consonant is written in its conjunct form:

(18) प्ह = /pɦʌ/ थ्ह = /thɦʌ/ म्ह = /mɦʌ/
स्ह = /sɦʌ/ च्ह = /cɦʌ/ क्ह = /kɦʌ/

In practice, Chantyals prefer to reverse the sequence of <ह> with syllable initial liquids and glides, producing:

(19) ह्र = /rɦʌ/ ह्ल = /lɦʌ/[12] ह्व = /wɦʌ/
ह्य = /yɦʌ/

This is just as well for <r>, as the sequence <rh> in initial position would be clumsy to affect in Devanagari. Either of the two possibilities in (20) would be required,

(20) र्‌ह = /rɦʌ/ रह = /rɦʌ/

and the second could, potentially, be misinterpreted as the sequence /rʌɦʌ/ is possible in Chantyal.

5.3 VOICELESS LIQUIDS: Orthographically related to the previous problem is the problem of voiceless liquids. These issues are related because the usual means of representing voiceless liquids in the languages in which they are found is with <ह>, the same character used to represent murmur where there is no special character. In Nepali, <ह> is murmured, not voiceless; this would cause no particular problem in languages where <ह> was not also being used to represent murmur. The two languages in our sample that have voiceless liquids are tonal, and in both languages murmur is a concomitant of tone — of two of Gurung's four tones and of one [or two] of Sherpa's two [or three]. In either or both languages, therefore, <ह> could also be used to transcribe tone.

In Sherpa, <ह> is used to transcribe the voiceless tap and the voiceless lateral:

(21) ह्र = /r̥a/ ल्ह = /l̥a/

Note that Sherpas use opposite orders of the liquid character and the <ह> character in writing the voiceless liquids. In the Sherpa documents I've seen, the <ह> character is also used with vowel-initial words with low tone: such words are pronounced with phonetic murmur.

In Gurung, Glover has proposed to render the voiceless lateral fricative with the sequence <kl>:

(22) क्ल = /ɬa/

The justification for this is that the voiceless lateral fricative derived historically from the <kl> cluster, and some dialects still retain this cluster, which contains a prominent voiceless lateral [kl̥a].

5.4 TONE: Before going on to talk about how tone can be represented in the Devanagari script, I should say few words about how tone is manifested in the Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal. Tone in these languages is not the domain of the syllable,

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[12] I've also seen ल्ह = /lɦʌ/, which is easier to read.

as in the Sinitic languages, but rather of the word. Root morphemes have inherent tone, which spreads over the suffixes, which have no inherent tone — there are almost no prefixes in these languages. Therefore, in a perfectly phonemic orthographic system, it would only be necessary to specify tone once for each word: each syllable need not be marked.[13]

There is no straightforward way to write tones in the Devanagari script, and three of the languages under consideration here — Gurung, Sherpa, and Tamang — are tonal. However, since murmur is a concomitant of certain tones in all these languages, the Devanagari murmured stops and affricates and the character <ह> could be used to distinguish some of the tones from the others. This is in fact done in all these languages to some degree.

As noted, tones are not written in Sherpa save for the convention of writing <ह> in words with low tone beginning with vowels. This failure to mark tone extends also to minimal pairs reported by Kelly (2003) as being distinguished solely by murmur, for example in the online Sherpa dictionary referred to earlier. In this respect, Sherpa is alone among the languages in our sample in not using the Devanagari murmured stop and affricate characters to distinguish some tones.[14]

Tamang has four tones, two of which are typically accompanied by murmur or by voiced initial consonants. In works written by Tamangs, the two historically low tones[15] are written with murmured or voiced initials; the murmured initials are written with either the existing Devanagari murmured stop and affricate characters or with sequences of consonants and <ह> as described above for Chantyal. The tonal distinctions between the two non-murmured tones and the two murmured tones are not written.

Mazaudon (1993) has proposed two techniques for writing all four of Tamang's tones, though I am not aware of publications which have taken up her suggestions. The first technique would employ numbers to mark tones in a manner analogous to the way tones are often indicated in linguist's transcriptions, *e.g.* publications by Mazaudon herself. The second would use voiced and murmured characters as noted above to indicate the two historic low tones, and use an apostrophe to distinguish the other tonal contrasts.[16] This would result in tone transcriptions like the following, from Mazaudon (1993):[17]

(23)

	PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION	TONE NUMBERS	MURMURED OR VOICED CHARACTERS + APOSTROPHE
'god'	^{1}la	१ला	ला
'eye'	^{2}mi:	२मी:	'मी:

---

[13] For more information on this see Mazaudon (1973, 1978, 1993-4).

[14] This, most likely, is further evidence for the decline of tonal distinctions in Sherpa noted earlier.

[15] There is considerable variation in Tamang dialects as to how the contemporary tones are pronounced as Mazaudon has documented in a number of publications, for example Mazaudon (1993-4).

[16] The use of the apostrophe in linguist's transcriptions of tonal contrasts in Tamang goes back at least to Hari (1970).

[17] The transcription in (23) incorporates Mazaudon's suggestions for indicating vowel length. These will be discussed below.

'hill'	³ri	३री	रही
'thief'	⁴jo	४यो	'य्हो
'chest'	¹ku	१कु	कु
'chin'	²kam	२काम	'काम
'back'	³ko	३को	गो
'thatch'	⁴ki	४की	'गी

An alternative possibility suggested by Mazaudon is that the subscript dot be used to indicate murmur, as in क़ी 'thatch'. As noted, I'm not aware of any Tamang speakers using the superscript numbers, the apostrophe, or the subscript dot to indicate tone.

Gurung, like Tamang, has four tones. In writing these tones, Gurung writers have used the Devanagari murmured characters to indicate the two murmured tones, but most writers, again like the Tamangs, have not distinguished the two non-murmured tones and the two murmured ones. There is one exception, however. R.B. Gurung in his 1998 dictionary uses the murmured characters to write the murmured tones, and uses the Devanagari distinction between between long and short <i> and <u>, <इ> and <उ> versus <ई> and <ऊ>, to distinguish between the murmured and non-murmured tones when the roots contain either of these vowels. The long versions are used for what Sprigg (1995) refers to as 'contour tones', the short versions for the level tones. It turns out that the greatest functional load in terms of frequency in distinguishing the contoured and non-contoured pairs is on the <i> and <u> vowels, as noted by Glover (2002). So, while this device is not available for the other vowels [recall that Gurung /a/ and /a:/ are phonemically distinct], it is has some utility. [Recall also that there is no length distinction in high vowels in Gurung.] Examples, from Glover (2002), can be found in (24):

(24)

NON-MURMURED NON-CONTOURED	NON-MURMURED CONTOURED	MURMURED NON-CONTOURED	MURMURED CONTOURED
कि	की	क्हि	क्ही

For the other vowels, only the murmured/non-murmured is marked:

(25)

NON-MURMURED NON-CONTOURED	NON-MURMURED CONTOURED	MURMURED NON-CONTOURED	MURMURED CONTOURED
के	के	क्हे	क्हे

5.5 VOWEL LENGTH: Three of the languages under consideration here have a phonemic distinction between long and short vowels: Gurung, Limbu, and Tamang. The Devanagari script can accommodate length distinctions in high and low vowels, but not in mid vowels, and all three languages distinguish long and short mid vowels. Limbu has, in addition, a quality distinction in mid vowels which will be discussed in the next section.

The length contrast in Gurung is found only in mid and low vowels and is quite marginal except in the low vowels, which can easily by accommodated in Devanagari.

Gurung authors do not write vowel length except in the low vowels, and write length for these vowels consistently.

Tamang distinguishes vowel length at all vowel positions. As noted, the Devanagari script is equipped with the means to write length distinctions with high and low vowels, though not with mid vowels. While this orthographic means is available for writing vowel length, it is not used consistently by Tamang writers. There are two reasons for this. First, Tamangs learn to use the Devanagari script in Nepali-medium schools, and in Nepali there is no phonemic difference in vowel length, though there is a quality difference between low vowels which is written with the <अ> and <आ> graphemes and their allographs. The orthographic long and short high vowel characters are simply a nuisance in learning to spell Nepali, since they are pronounced identically and are written on a non-transparent etymological basis. Tamang writers, therefore, do not associate these graphemes with the length distinctions in their language and write them in Tamang with no regard to their phonetic potential.

Second, with regard to the graphemes that can be used to write long and short low vowels: in Nepali these characters are used to write vowels which differ in quality, [ʌ]~[ɒ] *versus* [ɑ], not in length, whereas in Tamang there is a true length distinction: [ɑ] *versus* [ɑ:]. Since Tamang has [ɑ] but not [ʌ]~[ɒ], writers often use the long <आ> grapheme to write both long and short phonemes, particularly at the ends of words, though in other positions the the long and short vowels may be distinguished by the <अ> and <आ> graphemes, albeit inconsistenly.

Needless to say, the length difference in mid vowels is not written at all.

Mazaudon (1993) has proposed that the Devanagari character *visarga* be used to indicate vowel length for Tamang. The visarga could be used either as the sole means for writing long vowels or as an adjunct to the Devanagari long and short vowel characters. If the visarga is used as the sole means, she suggests using the long vowel characters for the short vowels. Her proposals are illustrated in (26):

(26)

PHONETIC	VISARGA AS ADJUNCT	VISARGA AS SOLE MEANS
ka	क	का
ka:	का	काः
ki	कि	की
ki:	की	कीः
ku	कु	कू
ku:	कू	कूः
ke	के	के
ke:	केः	केः
ko	को	को
ko:	कोः	कोः

So far as I am aware, these conventions have not been observed by Tamang writers.

For Limbu, on the other hand, the visarga has been used for publications in the Devanagari script to indicate vowel length. Limbu writers are likely to know the Limbu script, in which the vowel length distinctions found in the language can be written efficiently. Since most writers are fully aware of the existence of these length distinctions and that they may be written, they are prepared to use available devices to write them when using the Devanagari script.

5.6 ADDITIONAL VOWELS QUALITIES: In our sample, only one language has distinctions in vowel quality that cannot be straightforwardly accommodated within the Devanagari script. Limbu distinguishes /ɛ/ from /e/ and /ɔ/ from /o/, as well as their long counterparts. The Limbu script has graphemes for these phonemes, and when Limbus write their language in the Devanagari script they are aware that the distinctions can be written. In Devanagari script, the lower mid vowels are written with the mid-vowel characters together with the subscript dot:

(27)

PHONETIC	LIMBU IN DEVANAGARI
ke	के
kɛ	क़े
ko	को
kɔ	क़ो
ke:	केः
kɛ:	क़ेः
ko:	कोः
kɔ:	क़ोः

While it is certainly not the case that these conventions are always observed when writing the Devanagari script, it is not difficult to find printed examples utilizing them.[18]

5.7 GLOTTAL STOP: Two languages in our sample have a distinctive glottal stop, Limbu and Thangmi. In writing Limbu in the Devanagari script, a new glottal stop character, <ʔ> has been come into use. As noted in section 2.3, there is now a Unicode encoding for this character within the Devanagari character set. In the printed samples I've seen, the roman interrogation sign <?> is normally used in place of this Devanagari character since typesetters already have this sign for setting English. Some recent computer typefaces for Devanagari — the Annapurna typeface, for example, available from the Summer Institute of Linguistics — currently include this character, which, incidentally, is identical to the phonetic character for a glottal stop. The character may also be written with a horizontal headstroke, as in (28):

(28) ॽ

The first published Thangmi dictionary [Turin & Thami 2003] uses the novel technique of employing the halant, ordinarily used to negate the inherent vowel, to in-

[18] For example Kaila (2052 [1995]).

dicate the glottal stop. In this use, the halant is appended to vowel characters. In (29), we see the Limbu and Thangmi conventions for indicating the glottal stop:

(29)	PHONETIC	LIMBU IN DEVANAGARI	THANGMI IN DEVANAGARI
	koʔ	कोॽ	को्

6. SUPERFLUOUS GRAPHEMES: Earlier in the paper I discussed the fact that the Devanagari script contains more graphemes than are strictly necessary for a perfect phoneme-to-grapheme representation of Nepali. This results from the fact that the standard spelling is largely etymological and the alphabet is identical to the one used for writing Sanskrit. Because literacy in Nepal almost always begins in a Nepali language context, those writing the six languages of our sample transcribe obvious Nepali borrowings with their standard Nepali spellings insofar as possible, even when the distinctions the spellings encode are not used in the writer's own language — or in Nepali. Since some of these languages, most especially Chantyal,[19] have borrowed vast numbers of Nepali vocabulary items, Nepali spelling conventions will necessarily leak into whatever additional conventions are required for the language being written.

Even when writing words clearly not borrowed from Nepali, Nepali spelling conventions — and, indeed, the look of Nepali written on the page — affect the way our six languages are written. For example, four of the languages do not contrast long and short high vowels. Nonetheless, most writers of those languages make use of both the long and short graphemes in writing. In general, the distribution seems to be based on what can only be described as aesthetic considerations. This is most pronounced with regard to the <इ> and <ई> graphemes: the long vowel grapheme, with an arc extending leftward over the horizontal bar is written at the ends of words; the short vowel grapheme, with an arc extending rightward over the horizontal bar, is written elsewhere. An example, taken from Chantyal, is found in (30):

(30) चिहन्जी /cɦinji/ 'finished'

It is remarkable how consistent writers are in applying this particular convention in these languages.

7. CONCLUSIONS: Two sorts of conclusions can be drawn from the discussion above. The first concern changes to the Devanagari script which have typographic consequences; the second concern general conclusions regarding the modes of adaption of the Devanagari script for the languages in our sample.

With regard to the first, a few conclusions are summarized in (31):

(31)

1. With the exception of the character for the glottal stop, which has already been assigned Unicode encoding, there are no new characters requiring special encoding which are regularly used by writers in the languages of our sample.

[19] In Noonan (1996) it is estimated that 74% of Chantyal vocabulary is borrowed from Nepali.

2. There are some character combinations, commonly used for some of the languages of our sample, which are not found in Nepali and other Indic languages using the Devanagari script. These include combinations of <ह> and other consonants, the use of the subscript dot to indicate vowel quality, and the use of the halant to indicate the glottal stop. All of these, however, can be accommodated within standard Devanagari digital typefaces.
3. If Tamangs were to adopt Mazaudon's suggestions for using superscript Devanagari numerals for transcribing tone, these numerals would require special encoding — assuming that such coding has not already been assigned.

Some general conclusions are listed in (32):

(32)

1. It's clear that spelling conventions that people are exposed to in formal settings — in school, in literacy programs, etc. — even if these are in the medium of another language, determine how people will use the resources of the script when applied to their own languages.
2. Most writers adopt a rough and ready approach to writing their native languages, missing many distinctions and adhering to Nepali conventions wherever possible; where the Devangari script using Nepali orthographic conventions fail to render a phonemic distinction, the distinction is ignored.
3. Where the Devanagari script is adapted to the phonologies of these languages, it is only because of the existence of appropriate graphemes *and* an appropriate pronunciation of those graphemes in the Nepali of the schools. The uses to which the <ह> has been put are examples of this principle.
4. The proposals of foreign linguists are usually ignored by native writers. However, the works produced by linguists using reformed orthographies [high prestige dictionaries, translations, etc.] are often a source of community pride and the conventions used in such works may ultimately influence writing in these languages. Adoption of these proposals by community organizations could be decisive, particularly if they are used in active native-language literacy campaigns, but all this has not yet happened.
5. The existence of a widely-used alternative script better adapted to the language, as we find in Limbu, encourages the use of alternative conventions in the Devanagari script by native language writers.

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शुद्धिपत्र

अशुद्ध	शुद्ध	पृष्ठ–पंक्ति
वि. सं. १९३४	वि. सं. १९३३	२९–१२
हेमराज शाक्यद्वारा सम्पादित मिडिएभल नेपाल	हेमराज शाक्य तुलसीराम वैद्यद्वारा सम्पादित मिडिएभल नेपाल	३५–२८
वि. सं. २०३१ मा बुद्ध निर्वाण भएको १५१३ वर्ष हुन आउँछ	वि. सं. २०३१ मा बुद्ध निर्वाण भएको २५१३ वर्ष हुन आउँछ	३५–३२
भक्तपुर क्षमाहिटी टोलको अभिलेखबाट	चाँगुनारायणको अमृतदेवका पालाको अभिलेखबाट	४९–२
लिपिचित्र ३९	लिपिचित्र ४१	५२–२७

THE EVOLUTION OF DEVANAGARI SCRIPT

Shankar Man Rajbanshi

Kathmandu

नेपाली लिपिविकास

अक्षर तथा लिपिवर्णन

अक्षरसृष्टि–

अक्षर ब्रह्माबाट सृष्टि भएको भन्ने आचार्यहरूको भनाइ छ [1]। विक्रमको सातौं शताब्दीमा भारतमा घुम्न आएका चीनिया यात्री ह्युयेनसाङले पनि भारतवर्षको वर्णमाला ब्रह्माबाट आएको हो, त्यसैको रूपान्तर अहिलेसम्म चलिरहेको छ भनी भनेका छन् [2]। यो कुरो गौरीशङ्कर हीराचन्द्र ओझाले पनि आफ्नो भारतीय प्राचीन लिपिमाला भन्ने पुस्तकमा उद्धरण गरेका छन् ।

ब्राह्मी लिपिको उत्पत्ति–

जैनको पन्नवणासुत्त र समयांगसूत्रमा १८ लिपिको नाम[3] दिइएको छ । तिनमा सबभन्दा पहिलेको

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[1] षाण्मासिके तु समये भ्रान्तिः सञ्जायते यतः ।
धात्राक्षराणि सृष्टानि पत्रारूढाण्यतः पुरा ।।

(वी. पु. च.ल. नं. ९७२ को ज्योतिषतत्त्व)

किन भने ६ महीनाको समयमा नै भ्रान्ति हुन जान्छ भने धेरै समयमा भ्रान्ति किन नहुनु, त्यसैले पहिले ब्रह्माजीले पत्रमा उतारिएका अक्षर सृष्टि गर्नुभयो ।

नाकरिष्यद्यदि ब्रह्मा लिखितं चक्षुरुत्तमम् ।
तत्रेयमस्य लोकस्य नाभविष्यत् शुभा गतिः ।।

(नारदस्मृति)

यदि ब्रह्माजीले अङ्कित उत्तम आंखा नबनाइदिनुभएको भए लोकको यस्तो असल गति हुने थिएन ।

[2] चीनिया यात्री ह्युएत्संग जिसने इ. सं. ६२९ सं. ६४५ तक इस देशकी यात्रा की लिखताहै कि भारतवासियोंकी वर्णमालाके अक्षर ब्रह्माने बनायेथे और उनको रूपरूपान्तर पहलेसे अबतक आरहे हैं ।

[3] बंभी, जवणालि (या जवणालिया) दोसापुरिया (या दोसापुरिआ) खरोट्ठी (या खरोठी) पुक्खरसारिया, भोगवइया, पहाराइया, (या पहराइया), उयअंतरिक्खिया (या उयंतरकरिया), अक्खरपिट्ठिया (या अक्खर पुंठिया), तेवणइया (या वेणइया) गिण्हइया, (या णिण्हतिया) अंकलिवि (या अंकलिक्खा) गणितलिवि (या गणितलिवि) गंधव्वलिवि, आदंसलिवि (या आयसलिवि) माहेसरी (या माहेस्सरी) दामिली और पोलिंदी (भारतीय प्राचीन लिपिमाला पृष्ठ १७)

नाम बंभी (ब्राह्मी) छ। भगवतीसूत्रमा बंभी (ब्राह्मी) लिपिलाई नमस्कार गरेर (नमो बंभीए लिखिए) भन्ने सूत्रको प्रारम्भ गरेको छ। बौद्ध संस्कृत पुस्तकमा ललितविस्तर भन्ने पुस्तक छ। ललितविस्तरमा बुद्धको चरित्र छ। यो ग्रन्थ कहिले बन्यो भन्ने कुरा केही निश्चित छैन। यस पुस्तकको अनुवाद चीनमा भएको छ। यो अनुवाद वि. सं. ३६५ मा भएको थियो। त्यसमा ६४ लिपिको नाम[1] उल्लेख गरिएको छ। तिनमा पहिलो लिपिको नाम ब्राह्मी र दोस्रो लिपिको नाम खरोष्ट्री छ। लिपिको सृष्टि ब्रह्माबाट भएको भनी मानेको कुरा माथि बताइसकेको छ। सायद ब्रह्माबाट सृष्टि भएको लिपि हुनाले नै ब्राह्मी लिपि भन्ने नाम रहेको होला। मौर्यवंशी राजा अशोकका कतिपय टक शिलालेख पाइएका छन्। तिनमा उल्लिखित लिपिको नाम ब्राह्मी भन्ने चलन छ।

देवनागरी लिपिको उत्पत्ति–

ललितविस्तरमा उल्लिखित ६४ लिपिमा देवलिपिको पनि उल्लेख छ। तन्त्रशास्त्रको पुस्तकमा राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालयको नं. ४६२८ को श्रीमतोत्तरतन्त्र भन्ने पुस्तक छ। त्यस पुस्तकमा लिपिको प्रत्येक वर्णका विभिन्न देवता अधिपति बताएको छ*। यो तन्त्रशास्त्र कुन समयमा बन्यो भन्ने कुरा विचारणीय छ। जे होस् देवताबाट लिपि सृष्टि भएर लिपिको वर्णमालाको अधिपति देवताहरू बनेका होलान् भन्ने अनुमान हुन्छ। ब्राह्मी लिपिबाट कालान्तरमा गएर विभिन्न लिपि बनेका छन्। लिपिको विकासक्रम हेरेमा सो कुरा थाहा पाइन्छ। ब्राह्मी लिपिको शाखा प्रशाखाको रूपले उत्पन्न भएको देवनागरी लिपि सायद देवता अधिपति भएको हुनाले नै देवनागरी लिपि भन्ने नामकरण भएको होला।

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[1] ब्राह्मी, खरोष्ठी, पुस्करसारी, अंगलिपि, वंगलिपि, मगधलिपि, मांगल्यलिपि, मनुष्यलिपि, अंगुलीय लिपि, शकारिलिपि, ब्रह्मवल्लीलिपि, द्राविडलिपि, कनारिलिपि, दक्षिणलिपि, उग्रलिपि, संख्यालिपि, अनुलोमलिपि, ऊर्ध्वधनुलिपि, दरदलिपि, खास्यलिपि, चीनलिपि, हूणलिपि, मध्याक्षविस्तरलिपि, पुष्यलिपि, देवलिपि, नागलिपि, यक्षलिपि, गन्धर्वलिपि, किन्नरलिपि, महोरगलिपि, असुरलिपि, गरुडलिपि, मृगचक्रलिपि, चक्रलिपि, वायुमरुलिपि, भौमदेवलिपि, अंतरिक्षदेवलिपि, उत्तरकुरुद्वीपलिपि, अपरगौडादिलिपि, पूर्वविदेहलिपि, उत्क्षेपलिपि, निक्षेपलिपि, विक्षेपलिपि, प्रक्षेपलिपि, सागरलिपि, वज्रलिपि, लेखप्रतिलेखलिपि, अनुद्रुतलिपि, शास्त्रावर्तलिपि, गणावर्तलिपि, उत्क्षेपावर्तलिपि, विक्षेपावर्तलिपि, पादलिखितलिपि, द्विरुत्तरपदसंधिलिखितलिपि, दशोत्तरपदसंधिलिखितलिपि, अध्याहारिणीलिपि, सर्वरुत्संग्रहणीलिपि, विद्यानुलोमलिपि, विमिश्रितलिपि, ऋषितपस्तप्तलिपि, धरणीप्रक्षेपणालिपि, सर्वौषधनिष्यन्दलिपि, सर्वसारसंग्रहणीलिपि, सर्वभूतरुद्ग्रहणीलिपि (भारतीय प्राचीन लिपिमाला पृष्ठ १७)

*स्वरवर्णका अधिपति–

अको श्रीकण्ठवागेश्वरी, आको अनन्तआमोटी, इको सूक्ष्मीशमायादेवी, ईको त्रिमूर्तीशगुह्यशक्ति, उको वरीशमोहनी, ऊको अर्धीशप्रज्ञा, ऋको हारभूमिनिवृत्ति, ॠको अतिथीशप्रतिष्ठा, ऌको स्थानुविद्या, ॡको हरशान्ति, एको ऋण्टीश ज्ञानी, ऐको भूतीशक्रिया, ओको सद्योजातगायत्री, औको अनुग्रहीशसावित्री, अंको क्रूरेशशुक्रादेवी, अःको महासेनाइच्छा।

गुप्तलिपिको नामकरण–

भारतमा मौर्यसाम्राज्यको अन्त भएपछि गुप्तसाम्राज्यको आरम्भ भयो । वि. सं. ३८७-४३२ मा भारतमा समुद्रगुप्तको ठूलो दवदवा थियो । समुद्रगुप्तले भारतमा दिग्विजय गरेका थिए । त्यसपछि वि. सं. ४३२-४७१ मा चन्द्रगुप्तद्वितीय (विक्रमादित्य) का पालामा गुप्तसाम्राज्यको शक्ति चरम सीमामा पुगेको थियो । तिन ताक कलाको नयाँ ढङ्गबाट विकास भयो । ब्राह्मी लिपिको पनि क्रमश विकास हुँदै गयो । तिन ताक नयाँ ढङ्गको लिपि प्रचलनमा आइसकेको थियो । गुप्तसाम्राज्यको प्रभाव फैलिएको हुनाले तिन ताकको लिपि गुप्तलिपि भन्ने भयो । यो लिपि पछि गएर कुटिल लिपिमा परिणत भयो । त्यही कुटिललिपिबाट कालान्तरमा गएर नागरी शारदा लिपि निस्कयो । यसरी गुप्तलिपिको शाखा प्रशाखाको रूपमा अनेकन लिपि निस्के ।

लिच्छविलिपिको नामकरण–

जुन बखतमा भारतमा गुप्तसाम्राज्य थियो त्यस बखत नेपालमा लिच्छविको स्वतन्त्र राज्य थियो । यी लिच्छविले प्राचिन किरातवंशलाई पराजय गरी आफ्नो स्वतन्त्र राज्य स्थापना गरेका थिए । प्राचीन किरातवंशको ऐतिहासिक उपकरण प्राप्त भइसकेको छैन । लिच्छवि राजाहरूले आफूले गरेको काम तथा राज्यसंबन्धी सनद सवाल दुनियाँमा प्रचार गर्नाका लागि शिलापत्रमा कुँदायी ठाउँ ठाउँमा राख्ने गरेका थिए । यो कुरो शिलाभिलेखको अध्ययनबाट स्पष्ट थाहा हुन्छ । गुप्तसाम्राज्यताकाका भारतका शिलालेख र नेपालका लिच्छविकालका शिलालेखको तुलना गरी हेरेमा लिपिमा उत्तिको अन्तर पाइँदैन । लिच्छविकालमा नेपालमा चलेको लिपिलाई गुप्तलिपि नै भन्ने चलन थियो । वि० सं० २०१७ देखि नेपालसरकार पुरातत्त्व विभागबाट आफ्नै ढङ्गको नाम राख्नुपर्छ भनी लिच्छविकालको लिपिको लिच्छविलिपि भन्ने नामकरण भयो ।

नेपालमा लिच्छविअभिलेख अहिलेभन्दा करीब १५०० वर्ष पुरानो सम्म पाइएको छ, त्यो हो चाँगुको मानदेवको स्तम्भाभिलेख । अन्त्यमा गएर अन्दाजी विक्रमको नवौं शताब्दीको अन्त्य सम्म पनि लिच्छवि लिपिमा लेखिएका ताडपत्रका ग्रन्थ पाइन्छन् । तर लिपि पछि सम्म एकैनाशको भएर आएको छैन, प्राय शताब्दी पिच्छे भने जस्तो लिपिमा फरक फरक हुँदै आएको छ । त्यस्तो हुनु कुनै आश्चर्यको कुरो छैन । किन भने

व्यञ्जन वर्णका अधिपति

कको क्रोधशंकटा, खको चण्डकालिका, गको प्रचण्डशिवा, घको शिवेशघोरामुखी, ङको एकरुद्रवीरा, चको कूर्मचामुण्डा, छको एकनेत्रछागली, जको चतुर्मुखजयन्ती, झको अजेशझङ्कारिणी, ञको शर्मेशशत्रुध्नी, टको सोमेश्वरकपालिनी, ठको लांगलीशपूर्णिमा, डको डाकुरलामा, ढको अर्द्धनारीश विनायकी, णको उमाकान्तनारायणी, तको आषाढीशतारा, थको दिण्डिग्रसनी दको धात्रीश दहनी, धको मीनेशप्रियदर्शिनी, नको मेषेशनादिनी, पको लोहितपावनी, फको शिखीशफेत्कारिणी, बको छगलण्डवजनी, भको द्विरण्डभीषणी, मको महाकालमहाकाली, यको वालीणवायुवेगा, रको भुजंगदीपिनी, लको पिनाकीशपूतना, वको षडानन्दशिखिवाहिनी, शको वक्रानन्दकुसुमायुधा, षको श्वेतानन्दजम्बिका, सको भृग्वानन्दपरमात्मा, हको लकुलीशअंविका, क्षको संवर्तसंहारिणी ।

तिन ताका छाप्ने चलन आइसकेको थिएन । त्यस कारण हातले लेख्दै गएका लिपिमा कालान्तरमा गएर फरक पर्दै जानु स्वाभाविक छ । यसरी लिपिको मात्रामा केही कुटिलता आए पछि त्यसलाई कुटिललिपि भन्ने नै चलन थियो । त्यसलाई पनि पुरातत्त्वविभागले लिच्छविलिपि नै भन्ने नामकरण गरे । तर मात्रामा कुटिलता आए पछिको लिपिलाई उत्तरलिच्छविलिपि र त्यस भन्दा अघिको लिपिलाई पूर्वलिच्छविलिपि भनी दुइ भागमा विभाजन गरे । लिच्छविकालमा लिपिको विकास भएको कुरा तिन ताकाको ऐतिहासिक उपकरणबाट थाहा पाइन्छ ।

मल्लकालको लिपि

नेपालमा लिच्छविराज्यको अन्त भए पछि मल्लराज्यको उदय भयो । तिन ताका नेपालमा मिथिलाको लिपि संग मिल्दो जुल्दो किसिमको लिपि चलेको थियो, जुन लिपिलाई प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि भन्ने चलन छ । यो लिपि प्राय ताडयत्रमा लेखिएको ग्रन्थमा पाइन्छ । स्थितिमल्ल भन्दा पहिलेको मल्ल समयलाई प्राचीन मल्लकाल भन्ने चलन छ । प्राचीन मल्लकालका शिलाभिलेख थोरै मात्रामा पाइन्छन् । लिपिको विभिन्नता प्राचीन मल्लकालमा नै आइसकेको देखिन्छ । स्थितिमल्लको समयलाई मध्यकालको समय भन्ने चलन छ । मध्यकालमा कलात्मक ढङ्गले लिपिको विकास भएको पाइन्छ । जुन लिपिलाई भुजिंमोल कुँमोल आदि नामले व्यबहार गर्दछन् ।

पछि यक्षमल्लका छोराका पालादेखि परस्परको झगडाले गर्दा नेपालराज्य टुक्रिँदै गयो । अन्तिम मल्लकालमा नेपालमा लगभग ५२ जति राज्य खडा भए । तिनमा काठमाडौं उपत्यकाका राज्यलाई नेपाल राज्य भन्न लागे । त्यस राज्यमा विशेष गरी नेवारभाषाभाषीहरू थिए । त्यसैले तिनीहरूले व्यवहार गरेको लिपि हुनाले नेवारी लिपि भन्ने भयो । तिन ताकाका अभिलेखमा नेवारी भाषालाई जातिगत भाषाको भावना नराखी नेपालभाषा भनेको पनि पाइन्छ । किन भने गोरखाका राजा श्री ५ पृथ्वीनारायणले पनि काठमाडौं उपत्यकालाई नेपाल भन्दथे । श्री ५ पृथ्वीनारायणले टुक्रिएका राज्यलाई एकत्रित गरी नेपाललाई फेरि पूर्वरूपमा ल्याइ दिए । पूर्वरूप नेपालको जुम्ला प्रदेशमा पृथ्वीमल्ल मेदिनीवर्माहरूका प्राचीन शिलाभिलेख पाइन्छन् । ती अभिलेख देवनागरी लिपिमा अङ्कित छन् । ती देवनागरी लिपिलाई प्राचीन देवनागरी लिपि भन्ने चलन छ । पूर्व तिर प्राचीन अभिलेख दोलखा सम्मका पाइएका छन् । दोलखाका अभिलेख नेवारी लिपिमा अंकित भएको पाइन्छ । पूर्व चौदण्डी विजयपुर तिर प्राचीन लिपिका अभिलेख प्राप्य नहुँदा त्यता तिरको प्राचीन लिपि कस्तो थियो सो अस्पष्ट छ । त्यहाँ रहेका भग्नावशेषको उत्खनबाट पछि थाहा होला ।

मल्लकालका विभिन्न लिपिका नाम

मल्लकालका नेवारी लिपिमा विभिन्न भेद छन् । ती विभिन्न भेदका लिपिका नाम भुजिंमोल, कुँमोल, क्वेंमोल, गोलमोल, हीँमोल, पाचुमोल, लितुमोल, रञ्जना यी हुन् । मोलको अर्थ डिको हो । डिकोलाई नेवारी भाषामा मोल भन्दछन् । भुजिंमोल अर्थात् भुजंगमोल सर्पाकार जस्तो डिको लगाइएको लिपि भुजिंमोल भनिन्छ । कुँमोलको अर्थ कोण परेको डिको लगाइएको भन्ने हो । त्यस किसिमको लिपि कुँमोल भनिन्छ । क्वेंमोल अर्थात् घुमाउरो डिको लगाइएको लिपि क्वेंमोल भनिन्छ । नेवारी भाषामा

तिन ताक आग्लो लगाउने साँचोको नाउँलाई क्वेँ भन्दछन् । त्यो साँचो घुमाउरो किसिमको लामो हुन्छ । गोलमोल अर्थात् गोल पारी डिको लगाइएको लिपि गोलमोल भनिन्छ । हीँमोल अर्थात् वेरिएको जस्तो गरी डिको लगाइएको लिपि हीँमोल भनिन्छ । वेनुलाई नेवारी भाषामा ह्निनेगु भन्दछन् । पाचुमोल अर्थात् सम्म पारी डिको लगाइएको लिपि पाचुमोल भनिन्छ । सम्म परेकोलाई नेवारी भाषामा पाचु भन्दछन् । लितुमोल अर्थात् डिको फर्काई फर्काई लेखिएको लिपि लितुमोल भनिन्छ । फर्काउनुलाई नेवारी भाषामा लित छोयेगु भन्दछन् । रञ्जना लिपि यो अत्यन्त सुन्दर लिपि हो । त्यसैले यो लिपिको नाम रञ्जना रहेको हो । यो लिपि ऊ्वाट्ट हेर्दा मानो बुट्टैं बुट्टा हो कि भने झैं भान पर्दछ । त्यसलाई हेरिरहुँ जस्तो मनलाई आनन्द लाग्दछ । रञ्जनको अर्थ रंगाउनु वा रमाउनु हो । त्यस कारण रञ्जना लिपिले मनलाई आनन्द दिनुका साथै आकर्षण पनि गर्छ । यो लिपि सुनको मसी तथा चाँदीको मसीले समेत लेखेको पाइन्छ ।

लिपिको महत्त्व र त्यसको पठन पाठन

हिन्दू वर्णमालाको महत्त्व–

ब्राह्मी लिपिदेखि लिएर आज सम्मका हिन्दू[1] लिपिमा वर्णमालाका अक्षर उत्तिनै छन् । त्यस कारण लिपिमा विभिन्नता भए तापनि आखीर आधार वर्णमाला एउटै छ । यो हिन्दू वर्णमाला रोमन उर्दू तथा चीनका वर्णमालाका अपेक्षा कत्तिको महत्त्वपूर्ण छ भन्ने कुरा हामी स्वयं बुझ्न सक्छौं । यस वर्णमालाको उच्चारण सार्थक छ । यहाँ स्वरमिश्रित व्यञ्जन वर्णमा मात्रा लाउने एउटै नियमले पर्याप्त छ । यस वर्णमालामा लेख्नमा लाघव पढ्नमा सुगमता अर्थमा सरलता आदि गुण छन् । प्रत्येक वर्णका एक एक देवता अधिपति हुनाले प्रत्येक अक्षर मन्त्र तुल्य छन् । एउटा अक्षर पढ्दा एउटा देवताको नाम लिएजत्तिकै पुण्य छ । यिनै तत्त्वबाट कूटाक्षरहरू निर्माण भएका छन् । जुन कूटाक्षर षडक्षरी सप्ताक्षरी आदि छन् । ती

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1 हिन्दू शब्दको अर्थ—

ब्रह्माबाट अक्षर सृष्टि भयो । तिनमा स्वरवर्णका र व्यञ्जनवर्णका अक्षर छन् । व्यञ्जनवर्ण अव्यक्त वर्ण हो । किन भने व्यञ्जनवर्णमा स्वरवर्णको संयोग नभइकन उच्चारण व्यक्त हुँदैन । जस्तै ह्+इ=हि हुन्छ । तब

ह्+इन्दु=हिन्दु

(अव्यक्त) + (व्यक्त) = अद्वैत

यहाँ अव्यक्त 'ह्' संग व्यक्त इन्दुको संयोग भएर हिन्दु शब्द बन्यो । अनि हिन्दु शब्दले साकार रूप लियो । ह् अर्थात हकार पनि संस्कृत शब्द हो, इन्दु पनि संस्कृत शब्द नै हो । अतः दुइ संस्कृत शब्दको संयोग भए पछि हिन्दु शब्द पनि स्वभावतः विशुद्ध संस्कृत शब्दनै हुन्छ । योग दर्शन अनुसार हाम्रो सूक्ष्म शरीरको विशुद्ध चक्रमा शब्द या आकाश तत्त्व छ । जसको बीजमंत्र निराकार सदाशिव स्वरूप "हँ" हो । अतः हकार अव्यक्त अनन्त अनिर्वचनीय आकाशको शब्द प्रतीक हो । अव्यक्त भएकोले यसमा हकार 'ह्' सत्याकाशको सूचक हो र इन्दु सत्यको चन्द्रमा हो । सत्याकाशरूपी ह्मा सत्यको चन्द्र अर्थात इन्दु नै हिन्दु हो । यस ज्ञानरूपी इन्दुको खोजी गर्ने साधक पनि हिन्दुमै लय हुन्छ । हिन्दुउपनिषदमा भनेको पनि छ ।

अव्यक्तः ह शिवः प्रोक्तः इन्दुः शक्तिरिहोच्यते ।
तयोरैक्यं परब्रह्म हिन्दुरित्यभिधीयते ॥

[हाम्रो संस्कृति वर्ष ३ अंक ३ पृष्ठ ६१–६८ मा]
प्रकाशित श्री किरणशंकरको लेखबाट

कूटाक्षर तन्त्रशास्त्र महाकालसंहिता ग्रन्थमा उल्लेख छ। ती कूटाक्षर मन्त्रका बीजाक्षर हुन्। षडक्षरी कूटाक्षर भनेको ६ ओटा बीजाक्षरका मन्त्रले बनेको एउटा अक्षर हो। अरू कूटाक्षर पनि त्यस्तै हो। त्यस कारण हिन्दू वर्णमाला अन्य राष्ट्रको वर्णमाला भन्दा कति गौरव छ।

नेपालमा प्राचीन लिपिको पठन पाठन-

पुस्तक छाप्ने चलन आउनु भन्दा पहिले नेपालमा केही मानिस पुस्तक सारेर आफ्नो जीविका चलाउने गर्दथे। यसरी पुस्तक लेख्ने चलन छउञ्जेल केही मानिसलाई प्राचीन लिपिको ज्ञान थियो। पछि पुस्तक छाप्ने चलन आउँदा पुस्तक लेख्ने चलन हराउँदै गयो र प्राचीन लिपि मानिसले बिर्सन थाले। जब अंग्रेजी शिक्षाको प्रभाव जम्दै आएथ्यो तब मानिसले प्राचीन लिपिको पठन पाठन अनावश्यक संझन लागे। नेपालमा पहिले ठोस रूपमा इतिहास लेख्ने कुनै परम्परा थिएन। स्थितिमल्लका पालामा गोपालवंशावली लेखियो। त्यस पछि मल्लकालमा लेखिएका इतिहासको पुस्तक पाइएको छैन। वि०सं० १८४९ मा अंग्रेजराजदूत कर्कपेट्रिक नेपालमा आउँदा उनले आफूले देखे सुनेका अनुभवबाट नेपालको इतिहास लेखेर वि०सं० १८६८ मा प्रकाश गरे। वि०सं० १९३४ मा राइटले नेपालको वंशावली तयार गरी प्रकाश गरे। त्यस पछि नेपाली जनताले इतिहासको महत्त्व बुझ्न थाले र कतिपय नेपालका इतिहासकारहरूले त्यसैको आधारमा इतिहास लेखे। वि०सं० १९३७ मा भारतका पं. भगवान्लाल इन्द्रजीले नेपालका लिच्छविकालका र मल्लकालका केही शिलालेख प्रकाश गरिदिए। अनि नेपालीले शिलालेखको पनि महत्त्व बुझ्न थाले र लिपि पढ्नुपर्ने चासो गरे। यसरी आफूसंग रहेको वस्तु विदेशीको बत्तीले मात्रै छर्लङ्ग भई देख्न थालेका नेपालीले इतिहास तथा लिपिको पठन पाठन चलाए।

प्राचीन लिपिलेखनसामग्री

ताडपत्र-

तालवृक्ष भारतको दक्षिण प्रदेशमा समुद्रको किनारमा प्राय पाइन्छ । त्यसैको पातलाई ताडपत्र भन्दछन् । त्यसबाट हावा हंकने पंखा पनि बनाउँछन् । प्राचीन कालमा त्यस्ता ताडपत्रमा पुस्तक लेख्दथे । यसको पात ठूला तथा लामा हुन्छन् । जोर्नी जोर्नीमा काटेर टुक्रा टुक्रा पारी पत्र बनाउँछन् । चौडाइमा १ इञ्चदेखि ४ इञ्च सम्म पनि हुन्छ । पुस्तक लेखनका लागि ताडपत्र सुकाएर पानीमा उमालेर फेरि सुकाइदिन्छन् । अनि त्यसलाई शंख अथवा चिप्लो ढुङ्गाले घोट्छन् । अनि त्यसमा मसीले पुस्तक लेख्दछन् । त्यसमा कोही कीलाको टुप्पाले कोरेर पनि अक्षर लेख्तछन् । अनि त्यसमा गाजल दलिदिन्छन् । खाल्टोमा गाजल पुरिन्छ र अक्षर कालो स्पष्ट देखिन्छ । यसरी लेखिएको अक्षर उत्कीर्णाक्षर[1] भनिन्छ । ताडपत्र लामो खालको छ भने छेउ छेउ अगल बगलमा प्वाल पारेर तथा छोटो खालको छ भने बीचमा प्वाल पारेर त्यस प्वालबाट धागोले उनेर फलेकको गातामा राखेर पुस्तक सुरक्षित संग राख्तछन् । यस्ता ताडपत्रमा लेखिएका ग्रन्थ नेपालमा प्रशस्त पाइन्छन् ।

भुजापत्र-

भूर्जवृक्ष विशेष गरी हिमालप्रदेश जुम्लामा हुन्छ । त्यसको बोक्रा भुजापत्र भनिन्छ । प्राचीन कालमा भुजापत्रमा पनि पुस्तक लेख्दथे । यो भुजापत्र पातलो खालको हुन्छ र एक गज सम्म लामो पनि पाइन्छ । यसलाई बलियो पार्नाका लागि तेल घसी सुकाइदिन्छन् । सुकेपछि शंखले घोटेर चिप्लो पार्छन् । अनि त्यसमा पुस्तक लेख्तछन् । विक्रमको चौथो शताब्दी ताका भुजापत्रमा लेखिएका आगमसूत्र तथा पंचरक्षाका पुस्तक पाइन्छन् । सो भुजापत्र ताडपत्र जतिको बलियो हुँदैन । त्यस कारण भुजापत्रमा लेखिएका ग्रन्थ ताडपत्र जस्तै धेरै पाइदैन । किन भने भुजापत्रका पुस्तक[2] धेरै काल टिकाउ पनि हुँदैन ।

कागतपत्र-

चीनमा वि.सं. १६२ मा कागतको आविस्कार भयो । सो कागत काठको बोक्रा कुटेर पानीमा पकाई साँचोबाट बनाउने गर्थे । यो भन्दा पहिले भारतमा कपास कुटेर कागत बनाउँथे । तर त्यो सस्तो र सुलभ थिएन । कागत सस्तो र राम्रो उपलब्ध हुन थाले पछि त्यस कागतलाई २, ३ तह राखी माडले टाँसी

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1 वीरपुस्तकालय (हाल राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय) दोस्रा लगत नं. १५७ विषय नं. ८० को ताडपत्रमा लेखिएको स्कन्दपुराणपुरुषोत्तममहात्म्य भन्ने पुस्तक उत्कीर्णाक्षरले लेखिएको छ ।

2 लम्बकर्ण भट्टले लेखेको वि०सं० १७६२ को भूर्जपत्रको तान्त्रिक यन्त्र राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालयमा छ ।

पाको कागत बनाउने चलन भयो । त्यस पाको कागतमा हरिताल लगाएर सुकाउँछन् । सुके पछि शंख वा चिप्लो पत्थरले घोटेर कागतलाई कमलो र चिप्लो बनाउँछन् । अनि त्यसमा पुस्तक लेख्छन् । यसै गरी कागत बाक्लो गरी टाँसी नीलो रंग र नीलोतुथो लगाई नीलपत्र पनि बनाउँछन् । नीलपत्रमा चाहिँ सुन र चाँदीका मसीले अक्षर लेख्छन् । पाको कागतमा हरिताल लाउने नीलोतुथो लाउने हुनाले त्यो कागत धेरै काल टिकाउ र बलियो हुन्छ । त्यस्तो कागत हुतपति कीराले खान सक्तैन । बाक्लो पाको कागतको पुस्तक बनाउँदा ताडपत्रमा जस्तै पत्रको अगल बगल अथवा बीचमा प्वाल पारेर धागोले उनेर फलेकको गाता राखेर पुस्तकलाई सुरक्षित गर्दछन् । पाको कागतको पत्र नछुट्टिने गरी पटचाउन हुने गरी पुस्तक बनाउँछन् । त्यस्तो पुस्तकलाई ठ्यासफु भन्दछन् । यस्ता पुस्तक राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालयमा प्रशस्त छन् ।

कपासको कागत-

प्राचीन कालमा कपासको पनि कागत बनाउँथे । त्यस कागतमा चामलको पीठोको माड लगाएर सुकाउँछन् । सुके पछि शखले घोटेर चिप्लो पार्छन् । अनि त्यसमा पुस्तक लेख्छन् । यो कागत चित्रको पट्ट लेख्ने काममा पनि लगाउँछन् । तीर्थ जानेहरूले बद्रीनाथको पट्ट जगन्नाथको पट्ट प्रसादको रूपमा ल्याउँछन् र इष्टमित्रलाई बाँड्छन् । कपासको कागत बनाउने विधि मेक्समुलरको हिष्ट्री अफ एन्सेण्ट संस्कृत लिटरेचरमा राम्रोसंग दिएको छ ।

कपडा-

रेशमको कपडामा र सूतीको कपडामा पनि पुस्तक लेख्ने चलन छ । तर ठूला ठूला धनी मानिसले मात्र लेखाउँछन् । यो महँगो पर्ने हुनाले चल्ती छैन । वृहत्ज्ञानकोष नामक जैनपुस्तकभण्डारमा रेशमको कपडामा मसीले लेखिएका जैनसूत्रको सूची पाइन्छ ।

फलेक–

उहिले विद्यार्थीहरू फलेकमा अक्षर लेख्न सिक्दथे । फलेकमा रातो माटो अथवा गोलको धुलो लिपेर सुकाउँछन् । सुके पछि त्यसमा खरीले अक्षर लेख्छन् । उहिले बौद्ध विहारमा पनि फलेकमा खरीले पञ्चाङ्ग लेखी सर्वसाधारणको जानकारीका लागि टाँग्ने गर्दथे । पञ्चाङ्ग छाप्ने चलन आए पछि विस्तार विस्तार त्यो चलन हराएर गयो । ज्योतिषशास्त्रमा त्यसलाई धूलीकर्म गर्ने भन्दछन् । किन भने जस्तो धुलोमा लेखेको अक्षर मेटेर अर्को लेख्न हुन्छ त्यस्तै त्यसमा पनि मेटेर अर्को लेख्न हुन्छ । त्यसको रूपान्तर आजकल स्कूल पाठशालामा विद्यार्थीलाई सिकाइने गुरुद्वारा प्रयोग हुने बोर्ड (पाटी) मा परिणत भएको छ । भोटेहरू भोटे लिपिमा फलेकमा कुँदेर ग्रन्थ लेखतछन् । यस्तो ग्रन्थ ठूला ठूला गुम्बामा पाइन्छ ।

मसी-

उहिले खयरको पात पकाएर त्यसको मसी बनाउँथे । यो मसी साधारण चलन चल्तीमा प्रयोग गर्दथे । पाको कागतमा लेख्नका लागि पाको मसी बनाउँछन् । यो मसी लाहामा स्वाग हाली पकाएर त्यसको झोलमा गाजल घोटी पाको मसी बनाउँछन् । यो मसी सुके पछि पानीले पखाले पनि जाँदैन । यो मसी बलियो तथा टिकाउ हुन्छ । त्यस कारण यसरी बनाएको मसीलाई पाको मसी भनेको हो । त्यही लाहाको झोलमा

रंग मिलाएर रंगीन मसी पनि बनाउँछन् । नीलपत्रमा लेख्नका लागि सुन र चाँदीको मसी बनाउँछन् । सुन र चाँदीको मसी बनाउँदा सुन अथवा चाँदीलाई गुँदपानीमा घोटेर बनाउँछन् । सुनौला मसीले लेखेर सुकाउँछन् । सुके पछि शंखले घोटेर चहकिलो पार्छन् । रातो मसी बनाउन हिंगुल घोलेर पनि बनाउँछन् । पहेंलो मसी बनाउन चाँहि हरिताल घोलेर बनाउँछन् ।

कलम—

उहिले अक्षर लेख्दा बाँसको कलमले मसी चोपेर लेख्नथे । नली बनाउने निगालो जस्तो शर हुन्छ, जुन शर ४,५ हात सम्म लामो हुन्छ । त्यस्तो शर खपतडमा पाइन्छ । ढाक्रे हरु भारीका भारी बाँधी नलीको साथसाथै बेच्न ल्याउँथे । त्यो शरको आँठला आँठला सम्म टुक्रा पारी टुप्पो ताछेर कलम बनाउँछन् । प्वाँखको फेदको पनि कलम बनाउँछन् । धेरै लेख्नुपर्नेहरुले त फलामको पनि कलम बनाउँछन् । अरू कलम भन्दा फलामको कलम धेरै टिकाउ हुन्छ । प्वाँखको कलममा दुंसीको प्वाँख पनि प्रयोग गर्छन् । चित्र लेख्दा प्वाँखले लेख्छन् ।

कापा (रेखापाटी)

पाको कागतमा डोरो लगाउने यन्त्रलाई नेवारीमा कापा भन्दछन् । कापालाई नेपालीमा रेखापाटी भन्दछन् । फलेकमा समानान्तर पारी धागोको तान लगाएर बाँधेको हुन्छ । त्यस माथि पाको कागत राखी बाँसको टुप्पोले घोटेर डोरो लगाउँछन् । त्यही डोरोको धर्कोमा अक्षर सोझो पारी लेख्छन् ।

रुल (सलाका)

सोझो काठको डोलो वा च्याप्टो पारी रुल बनाएको हुन्छ । त्यस रुलको सहायताले मसीको डोरो हाल्ने गर्छन् । डोलो रुलबाट कागतमा मसीको डोरो हाल्दा कागतमा मसी लाग्ने संभव हुँदैन । च्याप्टो रुलबाट मसीको डोरो हाल्दा कागतमा मसी लत्पतिने संभव हुन्छ । त्यस रुललाई संस्कृतमा सलाका भन्ने प्रयोग पाइन्छ । त्यसलाई नेवारी भाषामा दासी भन्दछन् ।

संवत् प्रचलन

कलियुगसंवत्

कलियुगसंवत् भारतयुद्ध पछि चलेको भन्ने कुरा दक्षिण चालुक्यवंशी राजा पुलकेशी (दोस्रा) का समयको एहोलको पहाडखण्डमा रहेको जैनमन्दिरको शिलालेखबाट थाहा हुन्छ । त्यसमा भारतयुद्धदेखि ३७५३ तथा शकराजा (शकसंवत्) ५५६ वर्ष विते पछि यो मन्दिर बनाइयो भन्ने लेखेको छ । यसबाट (३७५३–५५६=३१९७) शकसंवत् भन्दा ३१९७ वर्ष पहिले भारतयुद्ध भएको थियो भन्ने देखिन्छ । भारतयुद्धमा विजय भए पछि युधिष्ठिरले राज्य चलाए । तब कलियुगसंवत्लाई युधिष्ठिरसंवत् पनि भन्दछन् । कलि आरम्भको विषयमा पुराण तथा भागवतमा पनि वर्णन गरेको छ[1] ।

विभिन्न संवत्को प्रचलन –

कलियुगसंवत् अर्थात् युधिष्ठिरसंवत् पछि अनेक संवत्को प्रचलन हुँदै गयो । जुन प्रचलन

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[1] यदैव भगवद्विष्णोरंशो यातो दिवं द्विज ।
वसुदेवकुलोद्भूतस्तदैव कलिरागतः ॥ (विष्णुपुराण ४।२४।५५)

जब वसुदेवको कुलमा उत्पन्न भएका विष्णुका अंश श्रीकृष्णजी स्वर्गारोहण हुनुभएथ्यो त्यसै वेलादेखि कलियुगको आरम्भ भयो ।

विष्णुर्भगवतो भानुःकृष्णाख्योऽसौ दिवंगतः ।
तदाविशत्कलिर्लोकं पापे यद्रमते जनः ॥ (भागवत १२।२।२९)

देवताका सूर्य भएका भगवान् श्रीकृष्णजी स्वर्गारोहण हुनुभए पछि मानिस पापमा रमांउन लागे । त्यसै वेलादेखि लोकमा कलि पस्यो ।

भविष्यं संप्रवक्ष्यामि कलिकश्च यथाक्रमं ।
जातो दुर्योधनो राजा कलिसंवत् प्रवर्तते ॥ (सुमतितंत्र २)

कलिदेखि क्रमैले भविष्य संवत् बताउँछु । दुर्योधन राजा भए पछि कलिसंवत् प्रारम्भ हुन्छ ।

श्री कृष्णजीका पालामा सूर्यग्रहण लागेको कुरो श्रीमद्भागवत दशमस्कन्ध ८२ अध्यायमा वर्णन गरेको छ । गणेश दैवज्ञले यो ग्रहण गणना गरेर द्वापरको ८६३९९२ वर्ष वितेपछि कलि लाग्नु भन्दा ८ वर्ष अगाडि विक्रमसंवत् पूर्व ३०५२ मा तारण संवत्सरमा फाल्गुनकृष्ण औंसी शुक्रवार १० घडी दिन चढ्दा सूर्यग्रहण लागेको थियो भन्ने कुरा सिद्धान्तशिरोमणिको टीकामा उल्लेख गरेका छन् ।

महापुरुषको नामबाट, राजनीतिपरिवर्तनबाट, प्रभावकारी महत्त्वपूर्ण कामबाट भएका छन् । ताडपत्रमा लेखिएको सुमतितन्त्र नामको ज्योतिष पुस्तकमा विभिन्न संवत् विषयको चर्चाको उल्लेख गरेको छ । त्यसमा युधिष्ठिरसंवत् २००० पछि नन्दसंवत् चलेको, नन्दसंवत् ८०० पछि चन्द्रगुप्तसवत् चलेको, चन्द्रगुप्तसंवत् १३२ पछि शूद्रकदेवसंवत् चलेको, शूद्रकसंवत् २४७ पछि शकसवत् चलेको, शकसंवत् ४९८ पछि मानदेव संवत् चलेको, मानदेवसंवत् ३०४ वर्ष सम्म रह्यो भनेको छ [1] । यो मानदेवसंवत्को खण्डन मेरो लिच्छवि-संवत्को निष्कर्ष भन्ने पुस्तकमा गरिएको छ । सो पुस्तक राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालयमा पनि हेर्न पाइन्छ ।

अर्को कुरो दैवज्ञ शिरोमणि लक्ष्मीपतिले वि०सं० १८५४ मा बनाएको रत्नदीप नामको ज्योतिष पुस्तकको टीकामा संवत्सरका विषयमा भविष्योत्तरको वचन दिइएको छ । त्यसमा युधिष्ठिर-संवत् ३०४४ पछि विक्रमसंवत् चल्ने र विक्रमसंवत् १३५ पछि शकसंवत् चल्ने कुरो लेखेको

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[1] युधिष्ठिरमहाराजो दुर्योधनस्तयो:पिवा
उभौ राजौ सहस्रे द्वे वर्षन्तु सम्प्रवर्तति
नन्दराज्यं शताष्टञ्च श्चन्द्रगुप्तस्ततो परे
राज्यङ्करोति तेनापि द्वात्रिंशच्चाधिकं शतम्
राजा शुद्रकदेवश्च वर्षसप्ताब्धिचाश्विनौ
शकराजा ततो पश्चाद्वसुरन्ध्रकृतस्तथा···

शुभ।। युधिस्थिर दुर्ज्जोधन उभौ राजाब्द २००० नन्दराज्याब्द ८०० चन्द्रगुप्तराज्याब्द १३२ सूद्रकदेवराज्याब्द २४७ शकराज्याब्द ४९८ मानदेवस्य राज्याब्द ३०४ शुभ ।। ॐ नमः सूर्याय ।। नेपाल सम्वत्सर कर्म्मभूमौ स्थाप्य । नयनाभ्रनागा ८०२ संयोज्यं शककालम्भवति । तं शककालं कर्म्मभूमौ स्थाप्य । नन्दाद्रिभूरग्नियुक्ता ३१७९ योज्ये । एतत् कलियुगम्भवति ।

(राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय विषय नं. ४९५ सुमतितन्त्र)

[२००० वर्ष सम्म युधिष्ठिर र दुर्योधनको संवत् चल्छ । त्यस पछि ८०० वर्ष सम्म नन्दको संवत् चल्छ । त्यस पछि १३२ वर्ष सम्म चन्द्रगुप्तको संवत् चल्छ । त्यस पछि २४७ वर्ष सम्म शूद्रकदेवको संवत चल्छ । त्यस पछि ४९८ वर्ष सम्म शकसंवत् चल्छ । त्यस पछि ३०४ वर्ष सम्म मानदेवको संवत् चल्छ । नेपाली संवत्मा ८०२ जोड्नू शकसंवत् हुन्छ, शकसंवत्मा ३१७९ जोड्नू कलिगत वर्ष हुन्छ ।

छ[1]। महात्मा बुद्धको निर्वाण भएपछि उनको नामबाट चलेको संवत्लाई बुद्धनिर्वाणसंवत भन्दछन्[2]। नेपाली संवत् चाहिं शङ्खधर साख्वाले चलाएको भन्ने वंशावलीमा उल्लेख छ। नेपाली संवत् चल्नु भन्दा पहिल नेपालमा अंशुवर्मासंवत् चलेको थियो। अंशुवर्मासंवत् चल्नु भन्दा पहिले नेपालमा लिच्छविसंवत् चलेको थियो। नेपालको आफ्नो संवत्को विषयमा विस्तृत विवरण मेरो लिच्छवि-संवत्को निष्कर्ष भन्ने पुस्तकमा हेर्नुहोस्।

संवत्को सम्बन्ध–

पाटन उकुबहीको भगवानमन्दिरको ढोकामाथि रहेको स्थितिमल्लका पालाको सुवर्णपत्रमा तथा पाटन सुनधाराको धर्ममल्लका पालाको शिलाभिलेखमा कलिगत संवत् विक्रमसंवत् शकसंवत् नेपाली संवत् गरी ४ संवत्को उल्लेख छ। ती अभिलेख अनुसार संवत्को संबन्ध थाहा हुन्छ। धर्म-मल्लको पालाको अभिलेखमा दिइएका संवत्मा कलिगत संवत् ४५०५ विक्रमसंवत् १४६१ शक-संवत् १३२६ नेपाली संवत् ५२४ उल्लेख छ। तब

कलिगत र विक्रमसंवत्को अन्तर = ४५०५–१४६१=३०४४
कलिगत र शकसंवतको अन्तर = ४५०५–१३२६=३१७९

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1 कुरुवंशोद्भवो राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः
वेदवेदाभ्रामाब्दं ३०४४ स्वं शकं चालयिष्यति
जातेऽधर्मे पुना राजा विक्रमार्को भविष्यति
पञ्चत्रिचन्द्रवर्षाणि १३५ स्वं शकं चालयिष्यति
शालिवाहो नृपो नाम शङ्करगराधने रतः

[रत्नदीप टीका]

कुरुवंशमा पैदा भएका कुन्तीका छोरा राजा युधिष्ठिरको संवत् ३०४४ वर्ष सम्म चल्नेछ। फेरि अधर्म भएमा राजा विक्रम हुनेछन्। १३५ वर्ष सम्म उनको संवत् चल्नेछ। त्यस पछि महादेवको आराधना गर्ने शालिवाह नामका राजा हुनेछन्।

2 बुद्धको निर्वाणकाल नेपालमा तथा सिलोनमा इ० पू० ५४४ केन्टनमा इ० पू० ४८९ विन्सेन्टास्मिथले इ० पू० ४७८ मानेको छ। तर अहिले हेवज्रप्रकाश भन्ने प्राचीन पुस्तकमा बुद्धनिर्वाणकालको एक प्रमाण पाइएको छ। जस्तै

"भगवति शाक्यसिंह परिनिर्वृतिशत १८०० वर्ष ११ मास ४ दिवस ५
शकावा (शकाब्दा) ११९४ भाद्र (दि) ने १४ लिखितमिद"

(हेमराज शाक्यद्वारा संपादित मिडिएभल नेपाल २२ पृ)

यस प्रमाणबाट बुद्ध निर्वाण भएको १८११ वर्ष ४ महीना ५ दिन जाँदा शाके ११९४ भाद्र महीनाको १४ दिनमा उक्त हेवज्रप्रकाश पुस्तक लेखिएको भन्ने कुरो स्पष्ट छ। त्यस कारण १८११–११९४=६१७ शकपूर्व (इ. पू. ५३९) मा बुद्ध निर्वाण भएको भन्ने त्यस बेला मानिएको सिद्ध छ। यसबाट अहिले वि.सं. २०३१ मा बुद्ध निर्वाण भएको १५१३ वर्ष हुन आउँछ।

कलिगत र नेपाली संवत्को अन्तर = ४५०५– ५२४=३९८१
विक्रमसंवत् र शकसंवत्को अन्तर= १४६१–१३२६= १३५
विक्रमसंवत् र नेपाली संवत्को अन्तर= १४६१– ५२४= ९३७
शकसंवत् र नेपाली सवत्को अन्तर = १३२६– ५२४= ८०२

हुने कुरो स्पष्ट छ। भास्वती नामको ज्योतिष पुस्तकमा पनि कलिगत वर्षमा ३०४४ घटाए पछि विक्रमसंवत् हुन्छ विक्रमसंवत्मा १३५ घटाए पाछ शकसंवत् हुन्छ भनेर बताएको छ [1]। सुमतितन्त्रमा पनि नेपाली संवत्मा ८०२ जोड्नू शकसंवत् हुन्छ, शकसवत्मो ३१७९ जोड्नू कलिगत वर्ष हुन्छ भनी बताएको कुरो माथि गइसकेको छ । इस्वीमा ५७ जोडे विक्रमसंवत् हुन्छ[2] ।

यो विक्रमसंवत् नेपालको आफ्नो राष्ट्रिय संवत् होइन भन्ने कुरा मेरो लिच्छविसंवत्को निष्कर्ष भन्ने पुस्तकमा प्रतिपादन गरिएको छ । यसको चर्चा वि०सं० २०२० आषाढ १० गते सिंहदरबारस्थित अफिसमा एक पत्रकारसम्मेलन हुँदा शिक्षासहायक श्री रानेश्वर देवकोटाले पनि यसरी गर्नुभएको थियो–

नेपालमा हाल प्रचलनमा भएको विक्रमसंवत्को प्रवर्तक को थियो त्यो आज सम्म पता लाग्न सकेको छैन । संवत् चलाउने व्यक्ति र चलेको ठाउँ पनि थाहा नराखी आज पनि हामी विक्रमसंत्को भोरमा परिराखेका छौं। राष्ट्रिय दृष्टिकोणले शोच्ने र कुनै विषयलाई औचित्य र वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोणले चलाउने आदत लागिसकेका हामीहरूले हाम्रो संस्कृतिको अनुकूल र आधारपूर्ण नेपाली संवत् कायम गर्नुपर्ने देख्छु ।

(वि०सं० २०२० आषाढ ११ गतेको गो०प०)

सुमतितन्त्रमा वर्णित युधिष्ठिरादिको राज्यवर्षानुसार संवत्को संबन्ध निम्न प्रकारको छ । जस्तै

कलिगत र शकको अन्तर = युधिष्ठिरराज्याब्द+नन्दराज्याब्द+चन्द्रगुप्तराज्याब्द+शूद्रकदेवराज्याब्द
= २०००+८००+१४२+२४७
= ३१७९

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1 कृतयुगाम्बरवह्निभिरुज्झितो गतकलिः किल विक्रमवत्सरः।
शरहुताशनचन्द्रवियोजितो भवति शाक इह क्षितिमण्डले ॥
[कलिगत वर्षमा ३०४४ 'घटाए पछि विक्रमसंवत् हुन्छ । विक्रमसंवत्मा १३५ घटाए पछि शकसंवत् हुन्छ]

2 इस्वीयसनाब्देषु क्षेप्यः सप्तशरस्तथा ।
सम्वत्सरपरिज्ञानं सुखेनैव प्रजायते ॥
(पंचांगविज्ञान)
इस्वीसंवत्मा ५७ जोड्नू भजिर्लसित विक्रमसंवत् थाहा हुन्छ ।

शाके र नेपाली संवत्को अन्तर= शकराज्याब्द+मानदेवराज्याब्द

= ४९८+३०४

= ८०२

नेपाली संवत् कार्तिकशुक्ल प्रतिपदामा फिर्दछ । शकसंवत् चैत्रशुक्ल प्रतिपदामा फिर्दछ । विक्रमसंवत् चाहिं हाम्रो नेपालमा वैशाख १ गतेदेखि फेर्ने चलन छ । त्यस कारण विक्रमसंवत् र नेपाली संवत्को अन्तर कार्तिकशुक्ल प्रतिपदादेखि वैशाख १ गते भित्र ९३६ अन्तर हुन्छ । त्यस्तै शकसंवत् र नेपाली संवत्को अन्तर कार्तिकशुक्ल प्रतिपदादेखि चैत्रशुक्ल प्रतिपदा भित्र ८०१ अन्तर हुन्छ ।

इस्वीसंवत् जनवरी १ तारीखमा फिर्दछ । त्यो हाम्रो पौष १६, १७ गते तिर पर्दछ । त्यस कारण विक्रमसंवत् र इस्वीसंवत्को अन्तर पौष १६,१७ गतेदेखि वैशाख १ गते भित्र ५६ अन्तर हुन्छ ।

शक संग इस्वीसंवत्को संबन्ध = वि० सं०–५७

= (श० सं०+१३५)—५७

= श० सं०+७८

नेपाली संवत् संग इस्वीसंवत्को सबन्ध = वि० सं०—५७

= (ने० सं+९३७)—५७

= ने०सं+८८०

उपर्युक्त संबन्धबाट शकसंवत्मा ७८ जोडे इस्वीसंवत् हुन्छ । त्यस्तै नेपाली संवत्मा ८८०, जोडे इस्वीसंवत् हुन्छ । पौष १६,१७ गतेदेखि वैशाख १ गते भित्र उक्त सम्बन्धमा ९ कम गर्नु पर्छ ।

लिपिविकासको ऐतिहासिक सारांश

जुनसुकै परिवर्तन हुनलाई पनि केही काल लाग्दछ । जस्तै २५ वर्ष अगाडि खिचेको आफ्नो फोटो र अहिले खिचेको आफ्नो फोटोमा आफ्नो रूप केही न केही फरक परिसकेको हुन्छ । अपरिचित मानिसले जाँच्दा बेग्ला बेग्लै मानिस जस्तो देखतछ । तर अलि नियालेर हेरेको खण्डमा एउटै व्यक्ति भन्ने थाहा हुन्छ । त्यस्तै १०० वर्ष अघि लेखेको लिपि र १०० वर्ष पछि लेखेको लिपि फरक परिसकेको हुन्छ । अहिले पुस्तक हातैले लेख्नु पर्दथ्यो, किनकि त्यस वेला प्रेस थिएन । हातले लेख्दै गएका लिपि कालान्तरमा फरक पर्दै गएका छन् । लेखनकलामा छिटो र राम्रोपनमा मानिसको प्रवृत्ति हुने स्वभाव छ । त्यसो हुँदा लेखनकलामा कठिनता र नराम्रोपनलाई छोड्दै गएर सरलतामा मानिस अभ्यस्त हुँदै गएकोले नै लिपिमा परिवर्तन आएको छ । ५० वर्षको वर परका लिपिमा त त्यत्तिको फरक भए जस्तो देखिदैन, किनकि एक दुइ ओटा अक्षरको लिपि फरक हुँदैमा संपूर्ण लिपि फरक देखिँदैन । क्रमशः अक्षरको डिकोमा मात्रामा आकार प्रकारमा परिवर्तन हुँदै शताब्दी पछि गएर लिपिमा स्पष्टै फरक भएको देखिन्छ ।

प्रथम मानदेवको ताकाको लिपि पूर्वलिच्छविलिपि भनिन्छ । त्यही लिपि अंशुवर्मा पछि गएर डिकोमा केही कुटिलता आइसकेको देखिन्छ । नरेन्द्रदेवको ताका त्यो लिपि स्पष्टै फरक भएको देखिन्छ । यसरी फरक परिसकेको लिच्छविलिपिलाई उत्तरलिच्छविलिपि भन्ने भएको छ । विक्रमको दशौं शताब्दी ताकाका लिपि नेवारी लिपिको पूर्वरूपमा आएको देखिन्छ । त्यस कारण त्यसलाई प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि भन्ने भएको छ । विक्रमको एघारौं बाह्रौं शताब्दी ताका लेखकहरूमा कलात्मकता आएकोले तिन ताका भुँजिमोल कुँमोल गोलमोल आदि विभिन्न प्रकारका लिपिको प्रचलन भयो । सुनको मसी चाँदीको मसी बनाएर पनि ग्रन्थ लेख्ने प्रचलन भयो । यसै सिलसिलामा रञ्जनालिपिको आविर्भाव भयो । तर ती लिपिहरूमा रमणीयता भए तापनि व्यावहारिक प्रचलनमा कठिनता हुनाले जुन लिपि छिटो लेखन सकिन्छ त्यही लिपिलाई मानिसले व्यावहारिक प्रचलनमा अपनाए । त्यस लिपिलाई प्रचलित नेवारी लिपि भन्ने भयो । रञ्जनालिपि चाहिँ केवल सौखिनका लागि मात्र भयो । सौखिनहरूले धेरै पछि सम्म पनि रञ्जनालिपिमा ग्रन्थ लेखाएर राख्ने गरेका थिए ।

काठमाडौं उपत्यकाका मल्ल राजाहरूको विशेष संपर्क मिथिला प्रदेश संग थियो । त्यस कारण काठमाडौं उपत्यकाका मल्लकालका प्रचलित नेवारी लिपि मैथिली लिपि संग प्राय मिल्दो जुल्दो छ । कर्णाली प्रदेशका लिपि देवनागरी लिपि संग मिल्दो छ । ती लिपिहरूमा आफ्नै आफ्नै मौलिकता छ । कोशी प्रदेशका लिपि किरातलिपि संग मिल्दो होला । तर किरातको सभ्यताले जग हाल्न नसकेकोले नै संकुचित भएर

किरातलिपिको प्रचलन डिगो नभएको होला भन्ने अनुमान हुन्छ । किरातका ऐतिहासिक साधन उपलब्ध हुन कठिन भएको हुनाले किरातको इतिहास प्राय अन्धकारमय छ । किरात जातिको सीमित परिवारमा व्यवहार गरिने आधुनिक प्रचलनको लिपि पाइएको छ । त्यसलाई किरातलिपि भनी मानिएको छ । तर प्राचीन प्रचलनका किरातलिपि पाइएका छैनन् । त्यस कारण त्यो कुन शाखाको लिपि हो कति मौलिकता छ भन्ने निर्णय हुन सकेको छैन । कारण हाम्रो लिपिपरिवार संग उक्त किरातलिपि धेरै फरक छ । त्यो लिपि पनि त विकास भएर नै आएको हुनुपर्छ । त्यसको पूर्वरूप कस्ता छ भन्ने कुरा अनुसन्धान गर्नु बाकी नै छ ।

यसरी लिपि परिवर्तन हुँदा एक लिपि गएर तुरुन्तै अर्को लिपिमा परिवर्तन भएको होइन । जस्तै उहिले कागतका आविस्कार नभए ताम्रा ताडपत्रमा पुस्तक लेख्दथे । कागतको आविस्कार भए पछि कागतमा पुस्तक लेख्ने गर्न थाले । तर कागतको आविस्कार भएर पनि कतिपय मानिसले ताडपत्रमा लेख्न छाडेनन् । प्रमाण राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालयमा रहेका हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थमा कागतमा लेखिएका ग्रन्थ भन्दा धेरै पछि पनि ताडपत्रमा लेखिएका ग्रन्थ छन । पछि विस्तार विस्तार ताडपत्रमा लेख्ने चलन हराउँदै गयो र कागतमा लेख्ने चलन डिगो भयो ।

त्यस्तै लिच्छविलिपिबाट प्राचीन नेवारी, प्राचीन नेवारीबाट भुजिमोल, भुजिमोलबाट कुँमोल, कुँमोलबाट गोलमोल, गोलमोलबाट रञ्जना, इत्यादि लिपि विस्तारै परिवर्तन भएका हुन् । प्राचीन नेवारी लिपिको प्रचलनमा आउँदा उत्तरलिच्छविलिपि पनि साथैं प्रचलन थियो । पछि प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि डिगो भयो उत्तरलिच्छविलिपि डिगो भएन । त्यस्तै भुजिमोललिपिको प्रचलनमा आउँदा कुँमोल गोलमोलको पनि साथ-साथ प्रचलन थियो । पछि भुजिमोललिपि कुँमोलको लिपिमा, गोलमोललिपि रञ्जनाको लिपिमा परिणत भयो । त्यस पछि कुँमोललिपिबाट पाचुमोललिपिमा परिणत भयो । पाचुमोललिपिको प्रचलनमा आउँदा गोलमोललिपि रञ्जनालिपि लितुमोललिपिहरूको पनि साथसाथै प्रचलन थियो । पछि पाचुमोल-लिपि डिगो भयो अरू लिपि डिगो भएन । त्यही लिपि नै प्रचलित नेवारी लिपिमा परिवर्तन भयो ।

मल्लकालमा काठमाडौं उपत्यकामा नेवारी लिपिकै प्राय प्रचलन थियो साथै देवनागरी लिपि पनि थोरबहुत प्रचलन थियो । शाहराज्यको संस्थापन पछि पनि काठमाडौं उपत्यकामा प्रचलित नेवारी लिपिको व्यवहार थियो । शाहराज्यको पश्चिममा विस्तार भए पछि पश्चिमी विद्वान्हरू संग बढी संपर्क रहन गयो र नेपाली भाषा डिगो भए जस्तै देवनागरी लिपि डिगो हुन गयो र देवनागरी लिपि नै व्यावहारिक प्रचलनमा आयो । नेवारी लिपि व्यावहारिक प्रचलनमा आउन सकेन र ऐतिहासिक रूपमा रहन गयो । यसरी सरलता एवं प्रभाव र आवश्यकताले गर्दा चीज डिगो रहन्छ अनावश्यकता भए पछि डिगो रहन सक्दैन भन्ने स्पष्ट छ । त्यस कारण अहिले हाम्रो लिपि आधुनिक देवनागरी भएको छ । देवनागरी लिपिमा पनि प्राचीन देवनागरी र आधुनिक देवनागरीमा लिपि फरक छ । देवनागरी लिपिको छापा आए पछि पनि प्राचीन छापा र आधुनिक छापाको लिपिमा केही फरक छ । यसरी प्राचीन ब्राह्मी लिपिदेखि लिएर विकास हुँदै आधुनिक देवनागरी लिपिमा परिवर्तन भएको छ । इत्यादि ज्ञान प्राचीन लिपिबद्ध सामानबाट प्राप्त भएको छ । यदि लिपिबद्ध नभएको भए प्राचीन आचार्य विद्वान्हरूको आफ्नो तपस्याद्वारा आर्जित ज्ञान उनीहरूकै साथमा लोप हुने थियो । उनीहरूको तपस्याद्वारा आर्जित विभिन्न ज्ञान विभिन्न साहित्यिक भाषाका प्राचीन

ग्रन्थहरू राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालयमा सुरक्षित छन्। ती ग्रन्थको अवलोकनबाट तिनीहरूको लालित्यपूर्ण साहित्यको चमत्कार विभिन्न बौद्धिक ज्ञानहरूको रस हामी अहिले पनि चाख्न पाएका छौं र त्यसबाट कहाँ कहाँ कति कति सभ्यता थियो भन्ने ऐतिहासिक ज्ञान पनि हामी पाउन सकेका छौं । लिपिबद्ध नभएर सुदूर अञ्चलका कतिपय रचनाहरू लोप भएका छन् । किरातकालको लिपिबद्ध ग्रन्थ वा तिन ताकाको कुनै लेख प्राप्त हुन सकेको छैन । त्यसले गर्दा किरातकालको सभ्यता तथा इतिहास थाहा पाउन गाह्रो भएको छ । प्राचीन लिपिबद्ध सामानहरूबाट विभिन्न ज्ञान हासिल गर्नका लागि विभिन्न लिपिको विकासक्रम नै पहिले प्रथम जान्नुपर्ने आवश्यक छ ।

लिपिचित्रको देवनागरी उतार

अशोककालको ब्राम्ही लिपि

लिपिचित्र १

लुम्बिनीको स्तम्भलेखबाट[1]

देवान पियेन पियदसिन लाजिन वीसतिवसाभिसितेन
अतन आगा च महीयिते हिदबुधे जाते सक्यमुनीति
सिलाविगड भीचाकालापित सिलाथंभे च उसपापिते
हिद भगवं जातेति लुंमिनि गामे उबलिके कटे
अठभागिये च

लिपिचित्र २

निग्लिहवाको स्तम्भलेखबाट

देवान पियेन पियदसिन लाजिन चोदसवसा
बुधसकोनाकमनस थुंबे दुतियं वढिते
......साभिसितेन च अतन आगा च महीयिते
... ... पापिते

लिपिचित्र ३

गिरनारको अभिलेखबाट [2]

इयं धंमलिपी देवानं प्रियेन
प्रियदसिना राजा लेखापिता इधन किं
चिजीवं आरभित्पा · · जू हितव्यं
न च समाजो कतव्यो बहुकं हि दोसं
समाजह्मिपसति देवानं प्रियो प्रियदसि राजा
अस्ति पितु एक चासमाजा साधुमता देवानं
प्रियस प्रियदसिनो राजा पुरा महानसह्मि
देवानं प्रियस प्रियदसिनो राञो अनुदिवसं ब
हूनि प्राणसतसहस्रानि आरभिसु सूपाथाय

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1 राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालयमा रहेको छापाबाट उद्धृत

2 राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. ९९३ को हुल्स पी. एच्. डी. को इन्सक्रिप्सन् अफ अशोकबाट उद्धृत

पूर्वलिच्छविकालको लिपि

लिपिचित्र ४

चाँगुको स्तम्भलेखबाट

प्रायात्पूर्व्वपथेन तत्र च शठा ये पूर्व्वदेशाश्रया
सामन्ताः प्रणिपातबन्धुरशिरः प्रभ्रष्टमौलिस्रजः
तानाज्ञावसवर्तिनो नरपतिः संस्थाप्य तस्मात्पुनः
निर्भीः सिंह इवाकुलोत्कटसटः पश्चाद्भुबञ्जगिमवान्

लिपिचित्र ५

लाजिमपाट क्षेमसुन्दरीको अभिलेखबाट

कान्त्या कान्तिमतः सुरानिहमहैर्व्विद्वत्तया पण्डितान्
शूराञ्शूरतयार्त्थिनोपि वसुभिश्शुद्धैर्य्यशोभिर्न्नृपान् ।
दाक्षिण्येन च दक्षिणानरमयत्सर्व्वांश्च सर्व्वैर्गुणैः
यः श्रीमान्स विशुद्धकाञ्चनवपुश्श्रीमानदेवो नृपः ॥१॥
पत्नी तस्याब्जपत्रामलशुभनयना श्लाध्यसौभाग्यरूपा
सञ्चिन्त्य क्षेमसुन्दर्य्यनुपमगुणधीर्द्धर्म्मकार्य्यैककार्य्या ।
श्रीमत्संस्थानरूपम्भवनमिह दृढङ्कारयित्वानुरूपम्
ऐशानं लिङ्गमग्र्यं विधिवदनुपमं स्थापयामास भक्त्या ॥२॥

लिपिचित्र ६

देउपाट रत्नसंघको अभिलेखबाट

महेन्द्रसमवीर्य्यस्य कन्दर्प्पसदृशद्युतेः ।
राज्ञाश्रीमानदेवस्य सम्यक्पालयतःप्रजाः ॥१॥
तत्पादभक्त्या विधिवद्रत्नसङ्घेन सर्व्वदा ।
रत्नेश्वरःप्रयत्नेन स्थापितोयं सुरोत्तमः ॥२॥

लिपिचित्र ७

जैसीदेवलको वसन्तदेवको अभिलेखबाट

ॐ स्वस्ति मानगृहात्परमदेवतबप्पभट्टारक
महाराज श्रीपादानुध्यातः श्रुतनयदयादान
दाक्षिण्यपुण्यप्रतापविकासितसितकीर्त्तिभट्टा
रकमहाराज श्रीवसन्तदेवःकुशली

लिपिचित्र ८

पशुपतिको आभीरीको अभिलेखबाट

आभीरी ख्यातगुणा भार्य्या परमाभिमानिनःसूनोः
पुण्यविवृद्ध्यै भर्तुर्देवत्वमितःप्रयातस्य १
पुण्येहनि धननिचयैर्द्विजजनमभिपूज्य दानमानाभ्याम्
पुत्रेणानुज्ञाता चकार संस्थापनं शम्भोः २
दत्वा चाक्षयनीवीं वप्रपरिच्छदविभूषादीन्
अनुपरमेश्वरसंज्ञाञ्च शम्भोर्भुवनमहितस्यास्य ३
भगवते देवदेवायास्मै स्वयम्प्रतिस्थापितायानु
परमेश्वरसंज्ञितायाभ्यङ्गस्नपनार्च्चनगन्धधू
पवलिनिवेदनादिप्रवर्त्तनार्थं खण्डफुट्टप्रति
संस्कारार्थञ्च

लिपिचित्र ९

देउपाटनको स्वामिवार्तको अभिलेखबाट

शुक्लद्वितीयायाम्भट्टारकमहाराज श्रीगणदेवे काल
मपरिमित समाज्ञापयति परमदैवत श्रीभौमगुप्त
पादानुध्यातो विदितविनयः शश्वत्कुशलकर्म्मण्युप
हितपरमानुग्रहःप्रकृष्टकुलजन्मा दिवमुपगत
योर्म्मातापित्रोरात्मनश्च पुण्योपचितये स्वामिवार्त्तः
सकलभुवनसम्भवस्थितिप्रलयकारणमनादिनि
धनं भगवन्तमिह शङ्करनारायणस्वामिनं प्रति
ष्ठापितवानपि च

लिपिचित्र १०

बूढानीलकण्ठको शिवदेवको अभिलेखबाट

स्वस्ति मानगृहाच्छ्रुतनयविनयगाम्भीर्य्यधैर्य्यवीर्य्या
द्यशेषु सद्गुणगणाधारो लिच्छविकुलकेतुर्भट्टार
क महाराज श्रीशिवदेवःकुशली

उत्तरलिच्छविकालको लिपि

लिपिचित्र ११

बुंगमतीको अंशुवर्माको अभिलेखबाट

स्वस्ति कैलासकूटभवनाद्भगवत्पशुपतिभट्टारक
पादानुगृहीतो बप्पपादानुध्यातः श्रीमहासामन्तां
शुवर्मा कुशली बूगायूमीग्रामनिवासोपगतां कुटु
म्बिने यथा प्रधानङ्कुशलमाभास्य समाज्ञापयति

पशुपतिको अंशुवर्माको अभिलेखबाट

ॐ स्वस्ति कैलासकूटभवनादनिशिनिशिचानेकशास्त्रार्थ
विमर्शावसादितासद्दर्शनतया धर्माधिकारस्थितिका
रणमेवोत्सवमनतिशयम्मन्यमानो भगवत्पशुप
तिभट्टारकपादानुगृहीतो बप्पपादानुध्यातः श्यूंशुवर्मा

लिपिचित्र १२

पाटन छिन्नमस्ताको ध्रुवदेवको अभिलेखबाट

भट्टारक महाराज श्रीध्रुवदेव ··· ··· ··· ··· ···
कैलासकूटभवनाद् भगवत्पशुपतिभट्टारकपादानुगृही
तो बप्पपादानुध्यातः श्री जिष्णुगुप्तः कुशली थम्बुगाङ्गुल्मूल
वाटिकाग्रामेषु निवासमुपगतान्कुटुम्बिनःकुशलमाभाष्य
समाज्ञापयति विदितमस्तु भवताम्भट्टारकमहाराजाधिराज
श्यूंशुवर्मपादैर्युष्मदीयग्रामाणामुपकाराय यो सौ ति
लमक आनीतोभूत्प्रलिसंस्कारा

लिपिचित्र १३

पाटन मीननाथको ध्रुवदेवको अभिलेखबाट

सम्यग्ज्ञानादियुक्तः सकलगुणगणं क्षोभयित्वा प्रधानम्
ब्रह्मादिस्थावरान्तञ्जगदिदमखिलं योसृजद्विश्वरूपम्
आजीव्यं सर्व्वपुंसाङ्गिरितरुगहनं यःकरोत्येकरूपम्
पायात्सोद्य प्रसन्नःस्मरतनुदहनश्छत्रचण्डेश्वरो वः
स्वस्ति श्री जिष्णुगुप्तस्य प्रवर्द्धमानविजयराज्ये
आचार्य भगवत्प्रनर्द्दन प्राणकौशिकेन भगवतः
श्छत्रचण्डेश्वरस्य

लिपिचित्र १४

पशुपतिवज्रघरको नरेन्द्रदेवको अभिलेखबाट

भूमिपालास्तैरप्युभयलोकनिरवद्यसुखार्थिभिः पूर्वराजवि
हितोयं विशिष्टःप्रसाद इति प्रयत्नतस्सम्यक् परिपा
लनीय एव यतो धर्मशास्त्रवचनम्बहुभिर्वसुधा दत्ता
राजभिस्सगरादिभिः यस्य यस्य यदा भूमिस्तस्य तस्य
तदा फलमिति स्वयमाज्ञा दूतकश्चात्र भट्टारक श्रीशि
वदेवः

लिपिचित्र १५

पाटन मीननाथको अभिलेखबाट

पूर्वराजस्थितिपरिपालने व्यवहितमनोभिर्भाव्यं यथाचाह ये
प्राक्तनावनिभुजां जगतीहितानां धर्म्यां स्थितिं स्थितिकृतामनुपा
लयेयुः

पशुपतिको द्वितीय जयदेवको अभिलेखबाट

अन्तर्दूररसातलाश्रितपतेर्द्दैवप्रभावाश्रिया
किं क्षीरस्नपनं विधातुमुदितःक्षीराणवस्याम्भसः
विष्णोःपातालमूलफणिपतिशयनाक्रान्तिलीला सुखस्था
दाज्ञां प्राप्योत्पतन्त्या स्त्रिपुरविजयिनो भक्तितोभ्यर्च्चनाय

लिपिचित्र १६

राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय प.ल.नं. ८३१ को स्कन्दपुराणबाट

सम्पूज्याश्रृणुयाद्धिकाः सेवनाद्योगसंसिद्धिः मोक्षञ्च परमं लभेत्
आद्यम्पुराणममुमातो द्विजवर्या मनोज्ञानुवाद परम् देव्याश्चापि महाप्र
भावकथमसर्वागमरन्वितम् स्कन्दस्य ··· व विजन्म · प्नुयुः ··
न्द्रैरसुरेन्द्रपक्षविबुधैः सिद्धै द्विजेन्द्रै रपि । शम्भो र्बोधितसर्वभावहृ
दयं यं येरयं सेवितः सर्वता ज्वालदर्कबाल्हत्वपुवस्त्यक्षःशश ङ्का
न्विषःदेवस्यानुचरा । वसुगण व ··· ··· देवदेवस्य भक्ताः
तत इह परमन्तम्प्राप्य योगम्मुनीन्द्रा । परममजारमन्तम्प्राप्स्य
थैषाधिवासमिति ॥०॥ आर्ष्यैस्कन्दपुराणसंयोगविधि समाप्तः

प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि

लिपिचित्र १८

विक्रमको दशौं शताब्दी

राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय प.ल.नं. १६४७ को लङ्कावतारबाट

नेन त्रिष्कालान्त्रिविधस्तथा ।। पीतरक्तप्रकारैस्तु पूजयेद्रक्तलोचन । रक्ता
ङ्गमेकवचनं द्विभुजश्च द्विलोचनम् ।। रक्ताम्बरधरं रौद्रं तृज्वालदग्धधारिणां
अर्घादी पूर्ववत् दद्याद्रुतीं च जले तथा।।पूर्ववत्पूजयत्सर्व्वम्नमछ्छाचीन्मशे
षत: ।। तृदशाधिकहस्ते हि मण्डलसम्प्रकीर्तितां ।। पञ्चरङ्गिकसूत्रेण
बहिर्धातश्च वेष्ठिता ।।०।। अथ राजा धिय:सूद्धप्रणाम्याञ्जलिना ब्रवीत्
इदानीं छार्तिरोगस्य स्रोतुमिच्छामि निश्चय । ··· ··· सम्वत् २८ कार्तिकक्र
ष्णदिवाष्टम्याम् । सर्वेषु तन्त्रेषु मुद्धृतं सारं लङ्कावतार पुस्तकमिति ।।

लिपिचित्र १९

विक्रमको एघारौं शताब्दी

पाटन सुनधाराको अभिलेखबाट

ॐ सम्वत्सरे शते षष्टे ।। मासे कार्त्तिके··· ···
नराणाम्परिभोगार्त

लिपिचित्र २०

पाटन कुम्भेश्वरको गुणकामदेवको अभिलेखबाट

नमश्श्री ललितेशाय सर्वज्ञ त्रिगुणात्मने देवात्मज वरेशाय भुक्तिमुक्ति
प्रदायिने

लिपिचित्र २१

भक्तपुर तौमढीटोलको निर्भयदेवको अभिलेखबाट

ॐ स्वस्त्योस्तु ।। सम्वत् अथह्न चैत्रशुक्लत्रियादस्याम् ।। ·· ···
महाराजाधिराज श्रीनिर्भयदेवविजयराज्ये: ।। श्रीखपृ ··· ···
शिकवलोतरटोलकवास्तव्य जय चतुपाकन श्रियाधरबवकपरक ···
देवस्थानार्थं द्वादसमानिधानि प्रज्ञातयति ।। तिलकमराण

लिपिचित्र २२

पाटन त्यागलटोलको भोजदेवको अभिलेखबाट

ॐ स्वस्ति कैलासवामसिरसि त्रिपथगा…ङ्ककपाल:
भाति कर्ण्णे भुजङ्गफणिमणिकिरणकण्ठश्लिट्कालकूट:
शम्भो:… मृगेन्द्र हिमगिरिस्तनया वामपार्श्वे निधाय
सेनानी…गणपतिप्रमथै: पान्तु व: चन्द्रमौलि:
राज्ये पुण्यमलङ्कृतयशनिधि: श्रीरुद्रदेवो नृप:
साधुभ्रातृज पुत्र धर्म्मणिरति श्री भोजदेवोपि राट्
तावेतो शशिभास्करोपमतिथौ सन्दशकाले हनि
नेपाले गहणारविन्दकुमुब श्रीलालिताख्यपुरे

लिपिचित्र २३

राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय ते.ल नं ३७० को ब्रह्मयामलतन्त्रबाट

इति भैरवस्रोतसि महातन्त्रे विद्यापीठ ब्रह्मयामल नवाक्षर विधा
ने पि च मते द्वादश साहस्रके एकोत्तरशतिम:पटल: समाप्त: ॥०॥
सम्वत् अचु २ माघशुक्लाष्टम्याम् आदित्यदिने राजाधिराजपरमे
श्वर श्रीबलदेवराज्ये। श्रीपशुपतिवास्तव्य श्रीजयाकरजीवेन ब्रह्म
यामल नाम शास्त्रं लिखितम् ॥

लिपिचित्र २४

विक्रमको बाह्रौं शताब्दी

पाटन थैनाटोलको अभिलेखबाट

षश्चासीति नियुक्तवत्सरशतं प्राप्ता सुपूर्ण्णं सुभा
मूलाबित्ययुता विधिश्च धवलाषाढत्रयोदस्यपि
श्रीप्रद्युम्नमहीपतेश्च सुखवद्राज्यं प्रतिष्ठापिता
तत्राचार्यवरेण सा प्रतिकृती रत्नाकरस्वामिना

पाटन सुनधाराको अभिलेखबाट

ॐ त्रिभिर्वर्षै: समायुक्ते संवत्सरशतद्वये । वै…
वल सप्तम्यां बुध पुष्योदयशुभे । श्रीयशोदेवभूनाथ:…

नयो धर्मतत्पर: । श्री वामदेव:कृतवान् प्रति ···
प्रतिष्ठिता । दिवाकरस्य या ··· पुरा संकल्पिता मुदा
कर्तुमुनास्तु सततं तेजसि ष्ठिरनुत्तरा ॥०॥

लिपिचित्र २५

नरदेवीको जलद्रोणीको अभिलेखबाट

सम्बत् आ थ १ श्री देवगुप्त
केन प्रनालि दातव्ये

राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय पं. ल. नं. ७४३ को सिद्धान्तसार पद्धतिबाट

इति महाराजाधिराज श्रीभोजदेवविरचितायां सिद्धान्तसारपद्ध
तौ जीर्णोद्धारविधि: समाप्त:

राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. ४८ को पञ्चरक्षाबाट

श्रेयोस्तु ॥ सम्वत् आल् ३ अशुनिशुक्लतृतीयायां ॥ श्री नेपालमण्डले राजाधि
राज: परमेश्वर: परमभट्टारक श्रीइन्द्रदेवस्य विजयराज्ये ॥ श्रीललित
पुरे श्रीमानीग्वल्के उकुरवु विहाराधिवासिन देय धर्म्मोयं प्रवरमहायानया
यिन श्रीतिलोचनवर्मस्य यदत्र पुण्यन्तद्भवत्याचार्योपाध्याय मातापितृपूर्वङ्ग
मकलसत्वरासे अनुत्तरज्ञानफलाप्नोति ॥ कायस्थ देववर्मनेन तत्पुस्त
कोयं लिखितं ॥ उदकानलचौरेभ्यो मूसिकेभ्य तथैव च । रक्षितव्यं

लिपिचित्र २६

विक्रमको तेऱ्हौं शताब्दी

पाटन वलटोलको अभिलेखबाट

ॐ अब्दे याति भुजग्रहाक्षिगुणिते मासे तथा
कार्तिके रुद्राह्वे नृपतौ च शासति भुवं चन्द्रोजया
य: सुधी: । पार्श्वे घट्टिकया सहाम्लजलद्रो
णीमिमां दत्तवान् मार्गोन्मार्जनगोष्ठिका
सु निहितं क्षेत्रञ्च वृरोपणं ॥ तरघट्टि
कापटलाच्छादनाय च शिवका चतुष्टयम् ॥

लिपिचित्र २७

भक्तपुर क्षमाहिटी टोलको अभिलेखबाट

ॐ स्वस्ति । ऋतुग्रहसमायुक्ते सम्वत्सरशतद्वये ।
ज्येष्ठमासासिताष्टम्यां राज्ये श्रीमृतभूपते: ।।
भ्रातुर्विजयदेवस्य स्वर्गसम्प्राप्तिहेतवे
श्रीविशाखादिदेवेन जनन्या मधुकश्रिय: ।।०।।
आज्ञां स्रजमिवाधाय मूर्ध्ना दोलाचलस्थिते: ।
कृष्णस्य विधिवद्भक्त्या विष्णोरर्चा निवेदिता ।
पुण्येतानेन लोकोयं सुखी भवतु सर्व्वदा ।
परार्थकरणायैव प्रवृत्तिर्हि महात्मनां ।।०।।

लिपिचित्र २८

राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. ७०१ को बृहज्जातकबाट

टीकेयं संक्षिप्ता होराशास्त्रे वराहमिहिरकृते भट्टोत्पलेन . . .इति
सम्वत् ३०५ प्रथमाषाढशुक्ल तृतीयायां ।। आदित्यवासरे । पुष्यनक्षत्रे ।
राजाधिराज श्रीमानेश्वर परमभट्टारक श्रीमद्गुणकामदेवस्य राज्ये लि
खितमिति ।। भट्टदेवज्ञज नेपालकस्य पुस्तमि . . . . . .

लिपिचित्र २९

देउपाटन सरस्वतीको अभिलेखबाट

ॐ कन्या विजयपालस्यामृतश्रीनामसोभना
कालस्य वसमापंना अलब्धोद्वहनक्रिया ।
नत्सोकाकुलितैरेभि: पितृमातृभिदु:खितै:
समुन्निनीषया तस्या शिवसायोज्यकारणात् ।।
रषपत्यग्निसंख्याते प्राप्ते सम्वच्छरे शुभे
मास्याषाढे शिताष्टम्यां हस्तर्क्षे बुधवासरे ।
स्थापिता श्रीमहागौरी भोगामोक्षसमीहया
निर्मितानन्दपालेन शिल्पिना शुभजन्मना

लिपिचित्र ३०

विक्रमको चौधौं शताब्दी

राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय ते.ल.नं. ३६७ को पञ्चरक्षाबाट

ॐ नमो भगवत्यै आर्यमहामाहसूप्रमर्दन्यै । एवम्मया श्रुतमेकस्मि
न्समये भगवान्राजगृहे विहरतिस्म । गृध्रकूटे पर्वते दक्षिणे पार्श्वे
बद्धगोचरे रत्नवृक्षप्रभासे वनषण्डे महता भिक्षुसघेन सार्द्धमर्द्धत्र-
योदशर्भिभिक्षुशतै: ।।

लिपिचित्र ३१

देउपाटन टुटे धाराको अभिलेखबाट

श्रियोऽस्तु सम्वत् ४३७ फाल्गुनबधि २ राजाधिराज श्री श्री जयान
न्ददेवस्य:धर्मविजं भवति । रगुवंशावतार श्री श्रीजयरूद्रमल्ल
देवस्य: लफधवरिषराजें भर्तात: श्री देवगोवाह्मना पात्रानां सुखाय
भवति । यजमान भवति किच्छावतार राजव्येद्य मलोतारोस म
नो वांच्छा शिद्धिरस्तु पूर्व्वदिवंगतपितादीना स्वर्गलोक संप्राप्तमन्तु ।
वारिश्च प्रतिगृह्णाति जस्तु वारिं प्रयच्छति उभौ दौ पून्यकमानो नियत
स्वरगगामिनो शुभ

लिपिचित्र ३२

विक्रमको पन्ध्रौं शताब्दी

पाटन सुनधाराको अभिलेखबाट

ॐ नम:शिवाय ।। अथ: श्रीकलिगतवर्ष ४४०५ श्रीविक्रमराजवर्ष
१४६१ श्रीसकराजवर्ष १३२६ श्रीमन्त:नेपालिक: श्रियोऽस्तु ।।
सम्वत् ५२४ चैत्रकृस्न ।। अष्टम्यायां तिथौ: ।। उतराषाढनक्षत्रे ।।
साध्ययोगे ।। वृहस्पतिवाशरे ।। युवराजराजाधिराजश्रीश्री म
ज्जय धर्ममल्लदेवस्य विजयराज्ये ।। श्री श्रीकुमारदेवताधिष्ठित

लिपिचित्र ३३

फर्पिङ खासिटोलको अभिलेखबाट

ॐ शुभश्रेयोऽस्तु सम्वत् ५२७ फाल्गुनशुक्लतृतीयायां तिथो रेवतीन
क्षत्रे ।। शुक्लयोगे ।। शुक्रवाशरे ।। समस्तप्रक्रियासमलंकृतयुवराजा
धिराज श्री श्रीमज्जय धर्ममल्लदेवस्य विजयराज्ये ।। श्रीश्रीकंकेश्व
रीवरलब्धप्रसादेत्यादिविरुदावलीविभाजमानसमस्तप्रक्रियासम

लंकत रावुत्त श्रीजय जैत्रसिंहदेव ॥ तथा रावुत श्रीजय योधसिंह देव ।। तथा रावुत्त श्रीरामसिंहदेव ॥ तथा रावुत्त श्रीदेवसिंहदेव ॥ एतैं भूपतिभिःसंपालिते ।। श्रीशिखरपत्तननगरे ॥

लिपिचित्र ३४

विक्रमको सोऱ्हौं शताब्दी

पशुतिको सतलमा रहेको अभिलेखबाट

स्वस्ति ।। श्रीसूर्यवंशनृपतिर्जययक्षमल्ल.प्रौढप्रतापभुवनैकमहाप्र–
वीणः । नेपालमंडलविभूषितराजराजो भूयाद्विपक्षमथनो भुवि
सुप्रसिद्धः ॥ तत्पुत्राःश्रीमंतःकुमाराःसन्ति ।। ज्येष्ठः श्रीजयरायम
ल्लनृपतिः श्रीरत्नमल्लःप्रभुःश्रीमच्छ्रीरणमल्लदेवगुणवान् श्रीराम
मल्लो नृपः ख्यातः श्रीअरिमल्लदेव सुकृती श्रीपूर्णमल्लोवरस्तेषां वैरिग
णाःप्रयांतु निधनं शंभो प्रसादादिह ॥ तद्विजयराज्ये ॥

लिपिचित्र ३५

विक्रमको सत्रौं शताब्दी

राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय च.ल.नं. १७९७ को नागरसर्वस्वबाट

राजा धर्म्मरतोऽस्तु निर्जितरिपुः षड्वर्ग्गवश्यो वशी निःल्केशाः
कृतिनो भवन्तुमुदिताःसत्कारलाभान्विताः । अन्योन्यप्रियता प्र
सन्नमनसः सर्व्वत्र सन्तु प्रजा नित्यं तिष्ठतु सर्व्वसत्वनिचयं सं
पूरिता मेदिनी ॥ इति पण्डितपद्म श्रीज्ञानविरचिते नागर
कसर्व्वस्वे सूतोदयो नामाष्टमः परिच्छेदः समाप्तः॥ ॥ इति
नागरकसर्व्वस्वं परिसमाप्तमिति शिवं ॥ ॥ नाम्ना नागरसर्व्वस्वं
नागराणां रसालयः ॥ श्रीजगज्ज्योतिरीशेन लेखयित्वा प्रयत्नतः
नेपाले पौषराकायां भम्मते खशरस्वरैः ॥ प्रीत्या समर्प्पितः
सिद्धिनरसिंहमहीभृते ॥ शिवमस्तु ॥ ॥

लिपिचित्र ३६

विक्रमको अठारौं शताब्दी

राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. १९३ को शतसाहस्रिका प्रज्ञापारमिताबाट

शतसाहस्र्याःप्रज्ञापारमितायाः द्वादशःपरिवर्तः । प्रथमखण्डः
समाप्त इति ।। ।। श्रीमद्राजाधिराजपरमेश्वरपरमभट्टारक श्रीम

च्छी श्री सिद्धिनरसिंहमल्लदेवस्य विजयराज्ये ॥ . . . . . .
सम्बत् अ अ च तै प्रथमाषाढशुक्लद्वितीयायां शनैश्चरदिने पुनर्वसुनक्षेत्रे
योगे बृद्धिशुभानुकूले । श्रीरयमुनिबौद्धाचार्येण लिखित समाप्तकृत
मिति ॥ · · · श्रो श्रीनिवासो नरदेवराजा यो भूतप्रजानां प्रतिपाल
दक्ष: । तस्य प्रम दाव्व विजित्य मारांल्लिलेख प्रज्ञां सकलां सलक्षां ॥ यच्छ्री
निवासो नयधर्मवारी ददौ विवद्दी लिखनाय प्रज्ञां ॥ अब्दे नेपालिके ख्या
ते ग्रहषड्ङ्गिरिसंयुते । मासे तु प्रथमाषाढे शुक्लपक्ष द्वितीयके ॥ पुनर्व
सौ च नक्षत्रे बृद्धियोगे शनेदिने । प्रज्ञापारमिता पूर्ण जगाम लिखिता
शुभं ॥

लिपिचित्र ३७

हनूमान्ढोकाको पेटीको अभिलेखबाट

महाराजाधिराज श्री श्रीराजराजेन्द्रकबीन्द्रजयप्रतापमल्लदेवन जिम
न्यात। अखल श्लोक दयकाव थम चोग्यं तया पण्डितजनपनिसेन थ्व
श्लोक वोङाओ अर्थ यायमाल गोम्हन थ्व वोङाओ अर्थ यात ओह्म धा
य पण्डित । । सम्वत् ७७४ माघशुक्ल श्रीपञ्चमी उत्रभद्र नक्षत्र
शिवयोग शुक्रवार थ्व कुन्ह्नु संपूर्ण ॥ ॥

लिपचित्र ३८

विकृमको उन्नाईसौं शताब्दी

कमलादो गणेशस्थानको अभिलेखबाट

ॐ स्वस्ति ॥ वैशाखमास शुक्रपक्ष ॥ एकादसि प्र द्वादश्यान्तिथे हस
नक्षतें, शुद्धिज्योग्ये आदि ववालसरे बृषरासिगते सविते कन्य
रासिगते चन्दं मसि,, श्री ३ गनेस कमरात्र देओ दाङा ॥ श्री ३ जय
ज्योतिप्रकाशम्मलदेवस प्रज्यास ल्होङा ॥ गुथिसमुचयन, महज
न, ज्यतमुगुराम, मचाका श्यासिहन तङा ॥ शुभ ॥ पताय छाय
मेवया आदिन ॥ सम्बत् ८७० मद्गुथिजममाल ॥ शुनानं सेके
मदु, पंचमहापाप

लिपिचित्र ३९

प्राचीन रञ्जना लिपि

विकृमको बान्हौं शताब्दी

राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. १६६ को उष्णीषविजय धारणीबाट

ॐ नमो भगवते वज्रधरसागरनिर्घोषाय तथागतायार्हते
सम्यक् सबुद्धाय ॥ ··· ··· ···

आन्योष्णीषविजयानाम धारणी समाप्ता ॥ देय धर्मोयं प्रवरमहायान
यायिन । राजाधिराज परमेश्वर परमभट्टारक । श्रीमदिन्द्रदेवस्य वि
जयराजे । श्री गांकुलवं धिवासिनः परमोपासिका । धर्नसिहस्य य
दत्र पुण्यं · · · मातापितापूर्वंगमेन । सकलसत्वरासे अनुत्तर
फल सप्रप्तमिति ॥ सम्वत् आलू ६ कार्तिकशुक्लपंचम्यां श्रीजावृ
लकेश्रीकनचैत्रमहाविहाराधिवासो साक्यभिक्षु रत्नगुप्तलेखकेन लि
खितमिदं पुस्तकमिति ॥

लिपिचित्र ४२

विक्रमको तेन्हौं शताब्दी

राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. २१० को प्रज्ञापारमिताबाट

देवधर्मोयं प्रवरमहायानयायिन. ॥ श्रीललिदब्रमे श्रीलोग्लकेधि
वासिन । सोमलछि भारी नाम्न यदत्र पुण्यं तद् भवत्वाचार्योपाध्याय
मातापितृपूर्वङ्गमं कृत्वा सकल सत्वराशेरनुत्तरज्ञानफलावा
प्तयेदिति ॥ ॥ सम्वत् आचू २ वैशाक्यसुक्लपौर्णमस्यां आदित्य
दिने श्रीपरमेश्वरपरमभटारक महाराजाधिराज परमशैव
श्री आनन्ददेव प्रवर्द्धमानविजयराज्ये लिक्षितिमिति ॥ ॥

लिपिचित्र ४३

इचंगुनारायणथानको अभिलेखबाट

···यद्धर्माभिरतिस्त्रिविक्रममतिर्नैपुण्यसत्पद्धतिः ॥ श्रीमत्पश्चिम
पर्वतेन्द्रशिखरप्रासादवेदीलसद्द्वारे श्रीहरिदत्तभूपतिकृतन्नाराय ··
··· ··· सिंहौ चक्रकम्बुकन्धरकलालङ्कारकान्तौ शिवौ ताम्रा···
··· ··· ढौकितौ जगदघध्वम्साय तेनानघौ ॥ मम सुकृतवलेनानेन
नन्दन्तु···हरिवपुषि लयन्ते प्राप्नुवन्तु प्रकामम् । पितृभिरथ ज
नन्याःसार्द्धमन्ते···स्मात्पितर इति समन्तात्प्रार्थनाङ्कुर्वतोच्चैः ॥ आ
काशनयनदहने याते नेपालवत्सरे राज्ये । माघसित शौरिदिव
से राज्ञः श्री विजयकामदेवस्य···लसत्पदसुवर्णवतीम्प्रशस्ति
सार्थामिमामिहमहीमिव माधवेन ।

लिपिचित्र ४४

विक्रमको चौधौं शताब्दी

राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. १६७ को नामसंगीतबाट

पृष्ठ ४–

अ आ इ ई उ ऊ ए ऐ ओ औ अं अः । स्थितो हृदि । ज्ञानमूर्ति र
हं बुद्धो बुद्धानां त्र्यध्ववर्तिनां ।।

अन्तिम पृष्ठ–

"एवं गच्छ" आर्यमालाजालात्षोडशसाहस्रिकात्महायो
गतन्त्रान्तर्गतिसमाधिजालपट्टलाद्भगवत्तथागतशाक्यमुनिभा
षितात्भगवतो मञ्जुश्री ज्ञानसत्वस्य परमार्थां नामसङ्गीति परि
समाप्ता: ।। ।। श्रीकाष्ठमण्डपपुरे सुरलोकसाम्ये देवालये व
सति श्रीजिनरखित: स: । यो धार्मिक: परमशिष्यदयाभिरामो
धर्म्मेन्द्रस्तेनकृतपुस्तक शुद्धसद्धं ।। नेपाल हायनशुद्धे गुणषड्व
ह्निवत्सरे । गते भद्रपूर्णमायां शतवृषादित्यमाशरे ।। राजा
धिराज परमेश्वर परमभट्टारक: श्रीमदभयमल्लदेवस्य
विजयराज्येति ।। साक्यभिक्षु श्रीअमतसेनस्य लिखितमिदं ।।

लिपिचित्र ४५

विक्रमको पन्ध्रौं शताब्दी

राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. ६८१ दुर्गासप्तशतीबाट

ॐ नमश्चण्डिकायै ।। श्रेयोऽस्तु सम्वत् ५२१ वैशाखशुक्लपञ्च
म्यान्तिथौ ।। मूलनक्षत्रे ।। शिवयोगे ।। आदित्यवासरे ।। श्री श्री
श्रीमत्पशुपतिचरणकमलसेवित श्रीश्रीश्रीमानेश्वरीष्टदेवताव
रलब्दप्रसादवीरनारायण जुवराज श्रीश्रीजयधर्म्ममल्लदेवस्य
विजयराज्ये ।। नेपाले ऽस्ति महीपतीश्वरवरो दाता गुणग्राहको
दीनानां सकलार्थिनोश्च महतां सत्कल्पवृक्षोपम: । जात: सूर्य
कुलावतंसतिलके सर्व्वान्नृपुन्निर्जितो वीर: श्रीजयकीर्तिम
ल्लनृपति: श्रीरूपनारायण: ।। रूपोत्तम:सकलनीतिवि
दाम्वरिष्ठो नाटयाङ्गशास्त्रगुणगीतमहाप्रवीण: । सत्सुंदरीहृद
यमोहनमन्मथश्री: श्रीकीर्तिमल्लनृपती रिपुचक्रमल्ल:

तस्याज्ञां शिरसा धृत्वा लिपिकरेण महात्मना । जसपतिना
समालेखि चण्डीमाहात्म्यपुस्तकम् ॥ शुभ ॥

लिपिचित्र ४६

विक्रमको अठारौं शताब्दी

राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय ते. ल. नं. ७१२ को अष्टसाहस्रिका प्रज्ञापारमिताबाट

ॐ नमो भगवत्यै आर्यप्रज्ञापारमितायै ॥ निर्विकल्प
नमस्तुभ्यं प्रज्ञापारमितेऽमिते ॥ या त्वं सर्वानवद्याङ्गिनिरय्यै
निरीक्षये ॥ आकाय्यमिव निलेपा निष्प्रपञ्चा निरक्षरा ॥
यस्ताम्येस्यति भावेन स यस्यति तथागतं ॥ तव रार्यगुणा
छाया बुद्धस्य च जगद्गुरोः । ··· ये धर्मा हेतुप्रभ
वा हेतु तेषान्तथागता ह्यवदत्तेषाञ्च यो निरोध एवं वादी
महाश्रमण ॥ ··· महाराजाधिराज परमेश्वर पर
मभत्तारक: श्रीश्रीगरुडध्वजावतार श्रीश्रीकवीन्द्र जयप्र
तापमल्लदेव प्रभु थाकुरस्य विजयराज्ये ॥···
श्रेयोऽस्तु सम्वत् ७७४ भ दवमासे शुक्लपक्ष चतुथ्यांति
थौ स्वातिनक्षत्रैन्द्रयोगे यथाकरणमुहूर्त्ते सोमवारसले कर्क्क
लासिगते सवितलि तुल्यलासिगते चन्द्रमसि एतद्दिने लिखित
संपूर्ण्णमिति ॥

लिपिचित्र ४७

काठमाडौं लगनवहालको अभिलेखबाट

ॐ नमः श्री २ वज्रसत्वाय ॥ स्वस्ति ॥ श्रीमत्पशुपतिचरण
कमलधूलिधूशरितशिरोरुह श्रीमन्मानेश्वरी इष्टदेवतावरलब्द
प्रसाददेदीप्यमानमानोनतरविकुलतिरकहनुमध्वजनेपालेश्व
र महाराजाधिराज राजेन्द्र सकरचक्राधिश्वर श्री २ जयपार्थिवेन्द्र
मल्ल परमभट्टारकदेवाना सदा समरविजयिना विजयराज्य

लिपिचित्र ४९

प्राचीन देवनागरी लिपि

विक्रमको तेन्हौं शताब्दी

राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय प. ल. नं. ९३४ को वाल्मीकिरामायणबाट

प्राप्तभूयिष्ठपारश्च सर्व्वतः प्रविलोकयन् । योजनानां शतस्या
न्ते वनराजीं ददर्शह । रुचिरश्च पतन्नेव विविधद्रुमशोभितं । द्वीपि

शाखामृगैर्दृष्टं मलयोपवनं महत् । सागरं सागरभूषान् सागरा
नूपजान् द्रुमान् । सागरस्य च पत्नीनां मुखानि व्यवलोकयन् । सम
हामेघसंकाशं वीक्ष्यन्नात्मानमात्मवान् । निरुत्मनमिवाकाशं चका
र मतिमान्मतिं । कायवृद्धिप्रवेशश्च मम दृष्टैव राक्षसाः ।···
इत्यार्षे रामायणे किष्किन्ध्याकाण्डे समुद्रलंघनं समाप्तं ॥ संवत्
१०७६ आषाढ वदि ४ महाराजाधिराजपुण्यावलोकसोमवंशोद्भ
व गरुडध्वज श्रीमद्गाङ्गेयदेवभुज्यमानतीरभुक्तौ कल्याणविजय
राज्ये नेपालदेशीयभाण्डशालिक श्री आनन्द ।

लिपिचित्र ५०

विक्रमको चौधौं शताब्दी

राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. ४४८ को हरिवंशबाट

श्रीमद्वाराणस्यां गोविन्दचन्द्रविजयराज्ये सम्वत् १२०१ अग्रहणमा
से शुक्लपक्षे तिथौ पौर्णमास्यां नंदशाली श्रीराजलचंद्रदेवस्यार्थे लेखापि
तं नायक श्रीवत्सोपाध्ये: लेखापितं पारिजातहरिवंशपुस्तकं लिखितं च
पण्डितश्रीमल्लदेवेनेति ।।···इति महाभारते शतसहस्र्यां संहितायां वै
याशिक्यां पारिजातो हरिवंश: समाप्त: ।।

लिपिचित्र ५१

राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. ८०१४ को लक्ष्मीसहस्रनामबाट

इति हिरण्य पा···ख्ये महातंत्रे भगवत्पद्मनाभप्रोक्तं हिरण्यगर्भहृ
दयसर्व्वस्वं लक्ष्मीनामसहस्रं सपूर्णमिति शुभं ।। ।। संवत् १२३७
आषाढशुदिपंचमी गुरुदिने लिखितं कृष्णपंडितेन ॥ ।।

लिपिचित्र ५२

विक्रमको पन्ध्रौं शताब्दी

जुम्लाका राजा पृथ्वीमल्लको तामापत्रबाट[1]

ॐ स्वस्ति ।। स्वस्तिके नंद्यावर्तश्रीशा भवतु शालं सुधाधवलसौध्रोत्संगतामनासं

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[1] कुमारी मिट्ठूदेवी सिजापतिको गोरखा राष्ट्रिय ऐतिहासिक चित्रावलीको
९७ पृष्ठबाट उद्धृत ।
अरू लिच्छविकालका शिलालेख तथा मल्लकालका शिलालेखहरूको लिपिको उतार
संशोधनमण्डलमा काम गर्दा अभिलेख पढ्दै आफ्नो कापीमा संग्रह गरिएको थियो ।
राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालयको ऐतिहासिक अनुसन्धान शाखामा मेरो सर्विस हुनाले
हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थहरूबाट पनि लिपि पूर्ति गर्न सकियो ।

मीरमनोहरो हरकुकाराअंघुक्षणिक्षपितप्रतीककुसुमाशुगजीवानुरमणीय ···
कटाक्षविक्षेपवारिवाहप्रमुदिततरुणजनमनःशिखावलापातः अपारसौरभ्य
लुभ्यन्मधुकरमुखरसहकाराशोकपुन्नागसुरलितपरिसरे श्रीमतिसेंजानग
रे ।। गरुडध्वजावतारापारसंसारसागरोत्तारसेतुभूतापधनश्रीत्रनाराध
नाधिमनप्राज्यराज्यरक्षाक्षमप्र चंडनिजभुजदंडकुंडलित कठिनकोदंड
निर्मुक्तनिशितशरनिकरनिर्भिन्नारातिप्रतीकोच्छलरक्षतजासवयानोन्न
तोत्कटकटपूतनोत्तालवेतालकोलाहलकाहलीकृतसमरधरणीमंडलाधीशो
पायनीकृतमत्तवेरंडगंडस्थलगलन्मदामोदमुदितमधुकरमधुरझांकार
मुखरिताप्रथितनारज्ञानसमोभट्टारकमहाराजाधिराजपरमेश्वर
राजतारातरणि श्रीमत्पृथ्वीमल्लदेवाः । सान्तःपुरपालिवाराः विजयिनः ।।
श्रीशाके १२७८ श्रावणसुदि १० शुक्रे राइको आदेस्

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संख्यालाई कहने अंकनिघण्टु

कुनै वस्तुलाई कहने शब्दको पदप्रयोगद्वारा संख्या बुझाउनेलाई अंकनिघण्टु भन्दछन् । त्यस अंकनिघण्टु अनुसार प्रयोगमा आएका संख्यालाई संकेत गर्ने कतिपय शब्द तल दिइन्छ ।

० – शून्य, ख, गगन, आकाश, अंबर, अभ्र, वियत्, व्योम, अंतरिक्ष, नभ, पूर्ण,

१ – आदि, शशि, इन्दु, विधु, चंद्र, शीतांशु, शीतरश्मि, सोम, शशांक, सुधांशु, अब्ज, निशाकर, भू, भूमि, क्षिति, धरा, उर्वरा, वसुधरा, पृथ्वी, क्ष्मा, धरणी, वसुधा, इला, कु, मही, रूप, पितामह, नायक, तनु,

२ – यम, यमल, अश्विनी, अश्वि, नासत्य, दस्र, लोचन, नेत्र, अक्षि, दृष्टि, चक्षु, नयन, ईक्षण, पक्ष, बाहु, कर, कर्ण, कुच, ओष्ठ, गुल्फ, जानु, जंघा, द्वय, द्वन्द्व, युगल, युग्म, अयन, कुटुम्ब, धन,

३ – राम, गुण, त्रिगुण, लोक, त्रिजगत्, भुवन, काल, त्रिकाल, त्रिगत, सहोदर, अग्नि, वन्हि, पावक, वैश्वानर, दहन, तपन, हुताशन, ज्वलन, शिखिन्, कृशानु, होतृ, अनल, सहज, धनञ्जय,

४ – वेद, श्रुति, समुद्र, सागर, अब्धि, जलधि, उदधि, वारिधि, जलनिधि, अंबुधि, केन्द्र, वर्ण, आश्रम, युग, तुर्य, कृत, अय, बंधु, कोष्ठ, चतुष्क, सुहृत्

५ – बाण, शर, सायक, इषु, भूत, पर्व, प्राण, पाण्डव, अर्थ, विषय, महाभूत, तत्त्व, इन्द्रिय, रत्न, अक्ष, सुत, तनय, पुत्र

६ – रस, अंग, काय, ऋतु, दर्शन, राग, अरि, रिपु, शत्रु, शास्त्र, तर्क, कारक, षड्,

७ – नग, अग, भूभृत्, पर्वत, शैल, अद्रि, गिरि, ऋषि, मुनि, अत्रि, वार, स्वर, धातु, अश्व, तुरग, वाजि, छंद, धी, कलत्र, जाया

८ – वसु, अहि, नाग, गज, दंति, दिग्गज, हस्तिन्, मातंग, कुंजर, द्विप, सर्प, तक्ष, सिद्धि, भूति, अनुष्टुभ्, मंगल, मृत्यु,

९ – अंक, नंद, निधि, ग्रह, रंध्र, छिद्र, द्वार, पवन, रत्न, गो, खग, धर्म,
१० – दिश्, दिशा, आशा, अंगुलि, पंक्ति, ककुभ्, रावणशिर, अवतार, कर्म
११ – रुद्र, ईश्वर, हर, ईश, भव, भर्ग, शूलिन्, महादेव, अक्षौहिणी, आय,
१२ – रवि, सूर्य, अर्क, मार्तंड, द्युमणि, भानु, आदित्य, दिवाकर, भास, राशि, व्यय,
१३ – विश्वेदेवा, काम, अतिजगती, अघोष

१४ – मनु, विद्या, इन्द्र, शक्र, लोक	२३ – विकृति
१५ – तिथि, घस्र, दिन, अहन्	२४ – गायत्री, जिन, अर्हत्, सिद्धि
१६ – नृप, भूप, भूपति, अष्टि, कला,	२५ – तत्त्व
१७ – अत्यष्टि, मेघ	२७ – नक्षत्र, उडु, भ
१८ – धृति	३२ – दंत, रद
१९ – प्रतिधृति	३३ – देव, त्रिदश, सुर, अमर,
२० – नख, कृति	४० – नरक
२१ – उत्कृति, प्रकृति, स्वर्ग	४८ – जगती
२२ – कृती, जाति	४९ – तान

अनुवार्ता

लिपिको इतिहास कसरी शुरू भयो भन्ने बारे दुइ थरी विचारधाराका विद्वान्हरूको मत भिन्न भिन्नै छ । एक थरी विद्वान्हरूको विचारधारा अनुसार मानव सृष्टि हुनु भन्दा पहिले एक किसिमको अज्ञानी पशु सृष्टि भयो, त्यही पशुको विकासबाट मानव बन्यो र मानवको विकास पछि लिपिको शुरू भयो भन्ने कथन छ । अर्को थरी विद्वान्हरूको विचारधारा वैदिक युग भन्दा पर जांदैन । त्यस विचार अनुसार त्यस युगमा एक शक्तिवान् पुरुषको उत्पत्ति भयो, जुन पुरुषलाई ईश्वर भनेर पुकार्छन्, तिनै ईश्वरबाट मानवको सृष्टि भयो र तिनै ईश्वरले मानवलाई ज्ञान तथा लिपि सिकाइदिए, त्यसैलेत वेद जस्तो गहन ग्रन्थको निर्माण हुन सक्यो भन्ने कथन छ । प्रत्यक्ष प्रमाण नपाएसम्म हामी शास्त्रलाई प्रमाण मान्ने हिन्दूधर्मावलम्बी हुनाले यहाँ शास्त्रानुसारको कुरा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ ।

नेपालमा आफ्नो प्राचीन लिपि पढ्ने पढाउने कुनै परम्परा नहुनाले प्राचीन लिपिविषयको प्रामाणिक ग्रन्थ थिएन । पाको कागतमा पुस्तक लेखाएर राख्ने साहुमहाजनमा एक प्रकारको भावना हुनाले सुनको मसीले चाँदीको मसीले समेत पुस्तक लेखाउँथे । त्यस्तो भावना रहुन्ज्याल गुभाजु तथा बाँडाहरू पुस्तक सार्ने वृत्ति गर्दथे । त्यसले गर्दा गुभाजु तथा बाँडाहरू नेवारी लिपि जान्दथे । पछि अंग्रेजी शिक्षाको प्रवाहले सो भावना र परम्परा पनि खतम भयो । नेपालको प्राचीन इतिहास तयार गर्न प्राचीन अभिलेख प्राचीन हस्तलिखितग्रन्थ प्राचीन वंशावली ताम्रपत्र ताडपत्र आदिबाट काम लिनु पर्छ । लिच्छविकालको अभिलेख प्रौढ संस्कृत भाषामा पाइन्छ । मल्लकालको अभिलेख संस्कृत मिसिएको प्राचीन नेवारी भाषामा पाइन्छ । हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थ पनि प्राय संस्कृत भाषामा नै पाइन्छ । गोपालवंशावली नामक प्राचीन वंशावली आधा भाग संस्कृतमा र आधा भाग प्राचीन नेवारी भाषामा छ । यसरी भाषाको दृष्टिले पनि प्राचीन इतिहास प्रामाणिक रूपले तयार गर्ने इतिहासकारहरूलाई एउटा कठिनाइ खडा हुन गएको छ । अर्को कुरो शताब्दी पिच्छे भने जस्तो लिपिमा फरक फरक हुँदै आएकोले लिपि पढ्न इतिहासकारहरूलाई समस्या पर्न गएको छ । त्यस कारण प्राचीन ऐतिहासिक उपकरणहरू पढनका लागि प्रथम खुड्किलो लिपिनै हुन आएको छ । त्यसका लागि लिपिवर्णमालाका साना साना पुस्तक पुरातत्त्वबिभाग तथा वीरपुस्तकालय मार्फत प्रकाश गरेथें । तर त्यसबाट लिपिज्ञान हुन्छ तापनि लिपिमा राम्रो दखल गर्न त्यतिले पर्याप्त थिएन र विभिन्न अभिलेखको आधारमा शास्त्रीय ढंगबाट नेपालको बृहल्लिपिग्रन्थ तयार गरेथें । अहिले त्यो संपूर्ण प्रकाश गर्न अनुकूल नभएकोले त्यसमा रहेका लिपिपत्र र संक्षिप्तरूपले लिपिवर्णनको सारांश दिई नेपाली लिपिविकास नामले यो पुस्तक प्रस्तुत गरियो । पछि अनुकूल भएमा लिपिका नियम सहित वृहत् रूपमा निकालिने छ ।

अन्वेषक तथा लेखक

शङ्करमान राजवंशी

विषयसूची

लिपिपत्रमा परेका हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थको सूची

लिपिचित्र	अभिलेखमा परेका ग्रन्थनाम	पुस्तकालयको संख्या	
१६	स्कन्दपुराण	राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय	प्र. ल. नं. ८३१
१८	लङ्कावतार	"	प्र. ल. नं. १६४७
२३	ब्रह्मयामलतन्त्र	"	ते. ल. नं. ३७०
२५	सिद्धान्तसारपद्धति	"	पं ल. नं. ७४३
२५	पञ्चरक्षा	राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय	नं. ४८
२८	बृहज्जातकसंक्षेपटीका	"	नं. ७०१
३०	पञ्चरक्षा	राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय	ते.ल.नं. ३६७
३०	गुह्यकालीपूजा	राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय	नं. ३६०
३१	नागरसर्वस्व	राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय	च.ल.नं. १७९७
३६	शतसाहस्रिका प्रज्ञापारमिता	राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय	नं. १९३
३९	खण्डखाद्य	राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय	प्र,ल.नं. १६९२
३९	श्रीमतोत्तरतन्त्र	राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय	नं. ४६२८
४१	उष्णीषविजयधारणी	"	नं. १६६
४२	प्रज्ञापारमिता	"	नं. २१०
४४	नामसंगीत	"	नं. १६७
४५	दुर्गासप्तशती	"	नं. ६८१
४६	अष्टसाहस्रिका प्रज्ञापारमिता	राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय	ते.ल. नं. ७१२
४९	वाल्मीकिरामायण	"	प्र.ल. नं. ६३४
५०	कृत्यकल्पतरु	राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय	न. ७१६
५०	हरिवंश	"	नं. ४४८
५०	खरपुच्छागभोग	"	नं. ३६१
५१	लक्ष्मीसहस्रनाम	"	नं. ८०१४

लिपिचित्र	अभिलेखमा परेकाग्रन्थनाम	पुस्तकालयको संख्या
५१	मतङ्गमातेश्वरतन्त्र	" नं. ६८८
५१	कुलमूलरत्नपञ्चकावतार	" नं. ४२५
५१	कुलालिकाम्नाय	" नं. ४२८
६३	कालमाहेश्वरविधि	राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय ते.ल. नं. ३७४
६३	पश्चिमचरुविधान	" प.ल. नं. १५५९
६४	महालसंहिता	" ते.ल. नं. ३९

लिपिचित्र	अंकतालिकामा परेका ग्रन्थनाम	पुस्तकालयको संख्या
३	संक्षिप्तभगवद्गीता	राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. ६९०
३	निश्वासतत्त्वमुखसंहिता	राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय नं. ४१५
४	अभिसमयालंकारकारिका	राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. ५५
४	उष्णीषविजयधारणी	राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय ते.ल. नं. ३५९
५	सर्वज्ञानोत्तरतन्त्र	" प्र.ल. नं. १६९२
५	भजवत्या स्वेदाया यथालब्धतन्त्रराज	" ते.ल. नं. ३५९
		" विषय नं. ६२
६	माध्यन्दिनीयशुक्लयजुर्वेदसंहिता	राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. ३७९
७	प्रतिष्ठालक्षणसमुच्चय	" नं. ३१६
८	महालक्ष्मीमत	राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय प्र.ल.नं. १३२०
९	सुग्रीवशास्त्र	राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकायल नं. ३४५
१०	गुह्यसिद्धि	राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय प्र.ल.नं. १६९२
१०	ज्यौतिषरत्नमाला	" च.ल.नं. १६१
१०	एकादशीमाहात्म्य	" प्र.ल.नं. १५५६
११	अष्टसाहस्रिका प्रज्ञापारमिता	राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. ७६
१३	चण्डीस्तव	राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय प्र.ल.नं. १६४५
१३	भोजदेवसंग्रह	" प्र.ल.नं. १६९२
१३	पञ्चरक्षा	" प्र.ल.नं. १११४
१४	"	राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. ८३
१९	किरणतन्त्र	" नं. ८९३
१९	योगयाज्ञवल्क्यसंहिता	राष्ट्रिय पुस्तकालय नं. ६९६

PLATE 1

लिपिचित्र (१)
ब्राह्मी लिपि
मौर्यवंशी राजा अशोकको लुम्बिनीको स्तम्भलेखबाट
वि.पू. २०० को

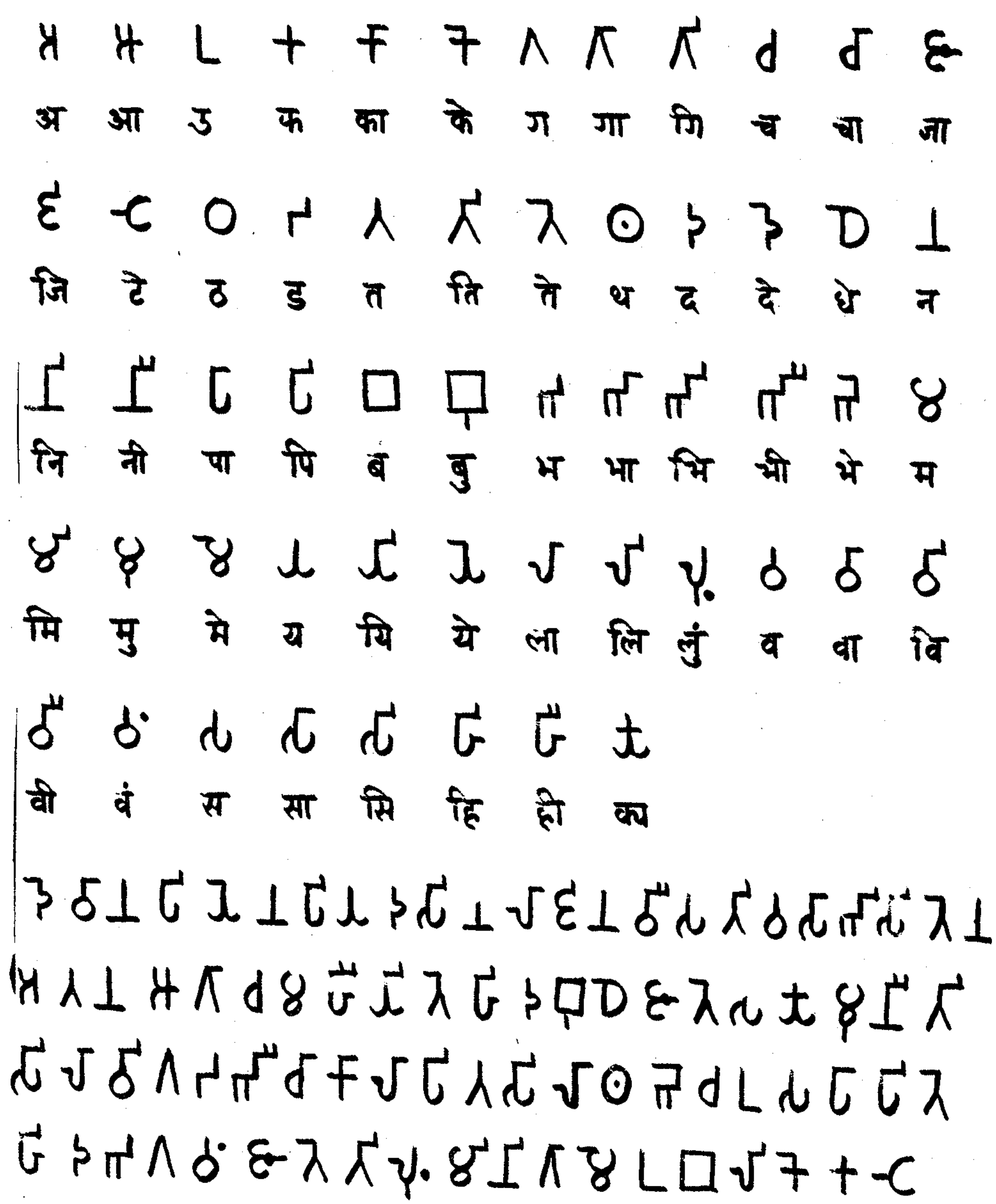
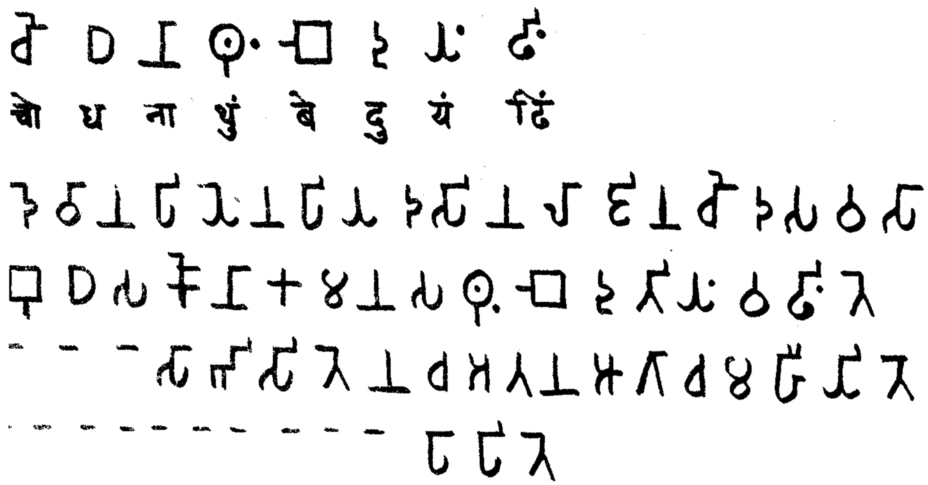


PLATE 2

लिपिचित्र (२)
ब्राह्मी लिपि
मौर्यवंशी राजा अशोकको निग्लिहवाको शिलालेखबाट
वि.पू. २०० को



लिपिचित्र (३)
अन्य शिलालेखहरूबाट पूरित
वर्णमाला

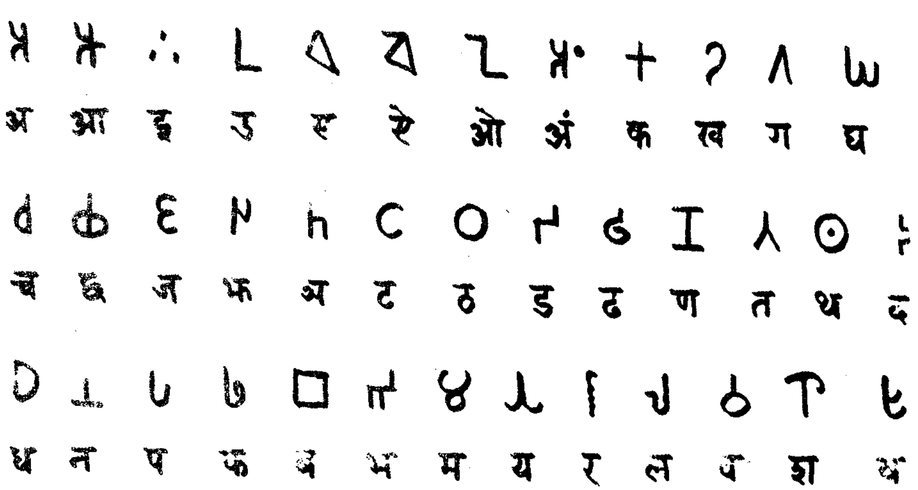


PLATE 4

लिपिचित्र (४)

पूर्व लिच्छवि लिपि

लिच्छविवंशी राजा मानदेवको चाँगुको स्तम्भाभिलेखबाट

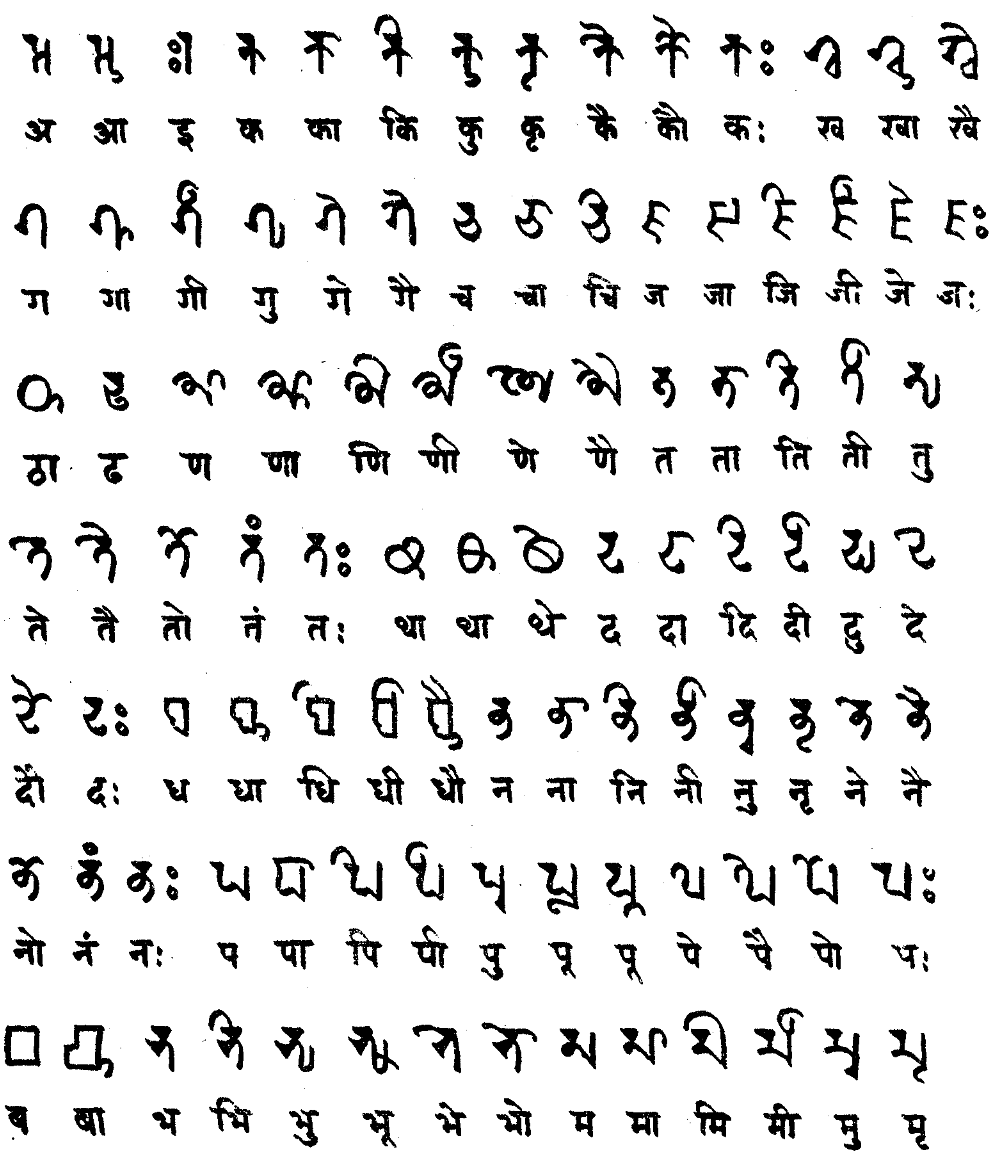
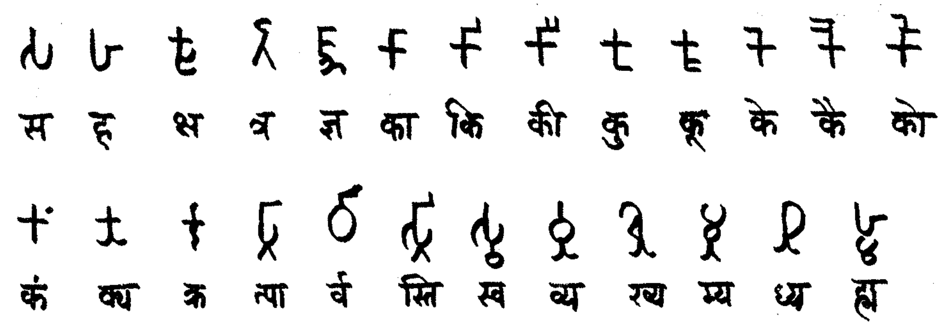


PLATE 3

ब्राह्मी लिपि

अन्य शिलालेखहरूबाट उद्धृत वर्णहरू



गिरनारको अभिलेखबाट

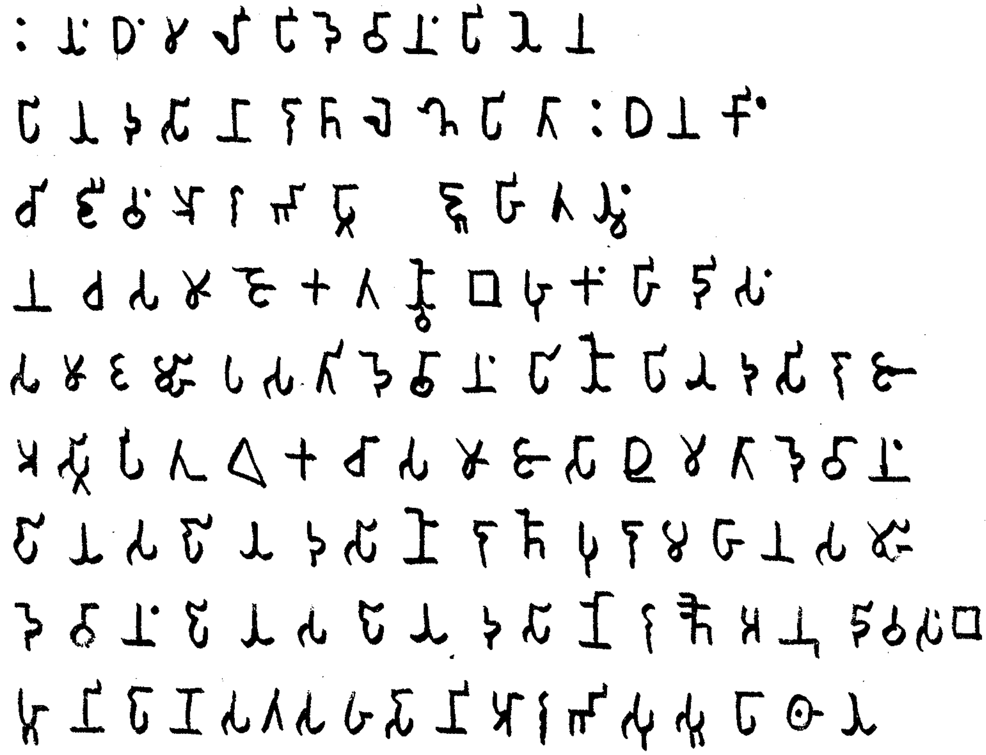


PLATE 5

पूर्व लिच्छवि लिपि

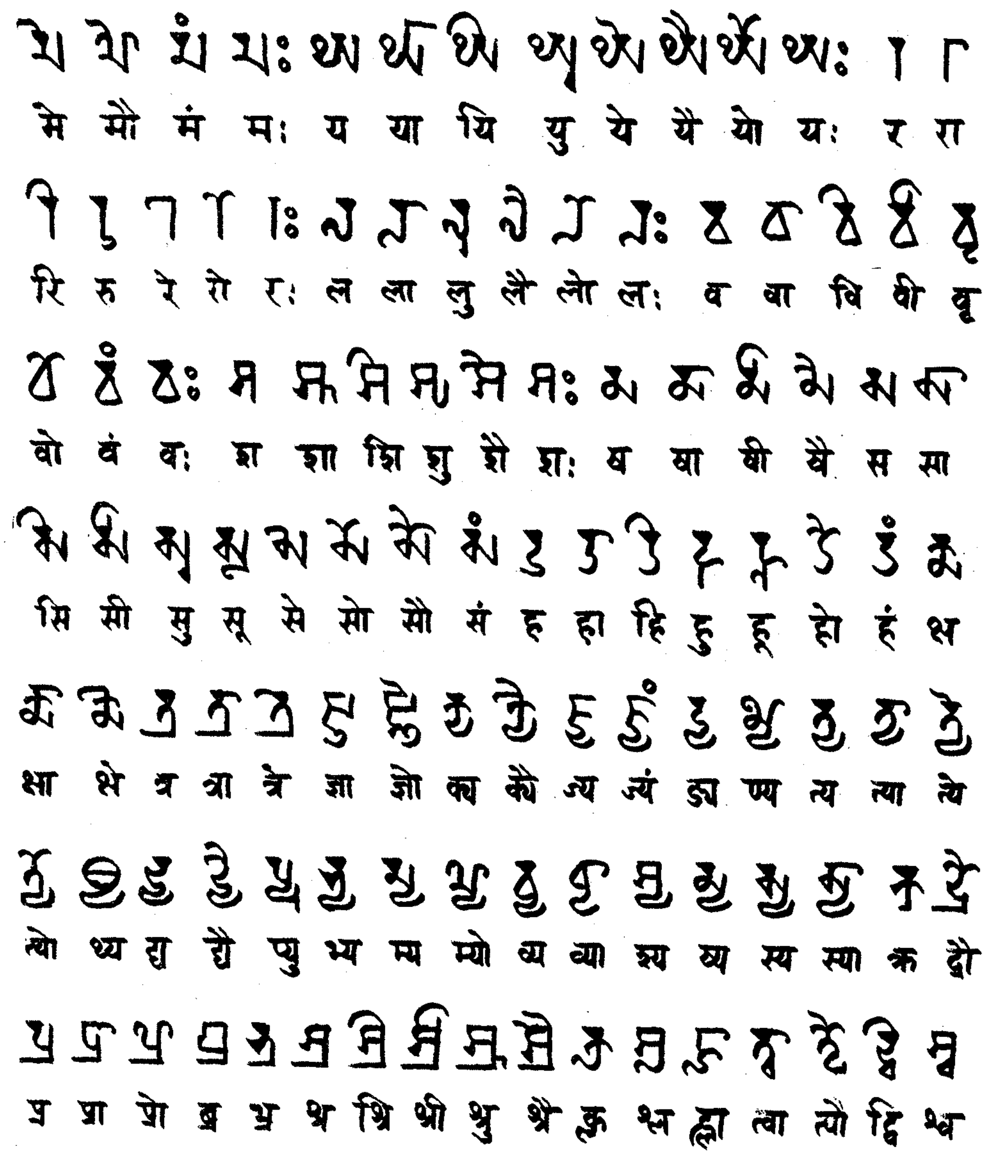
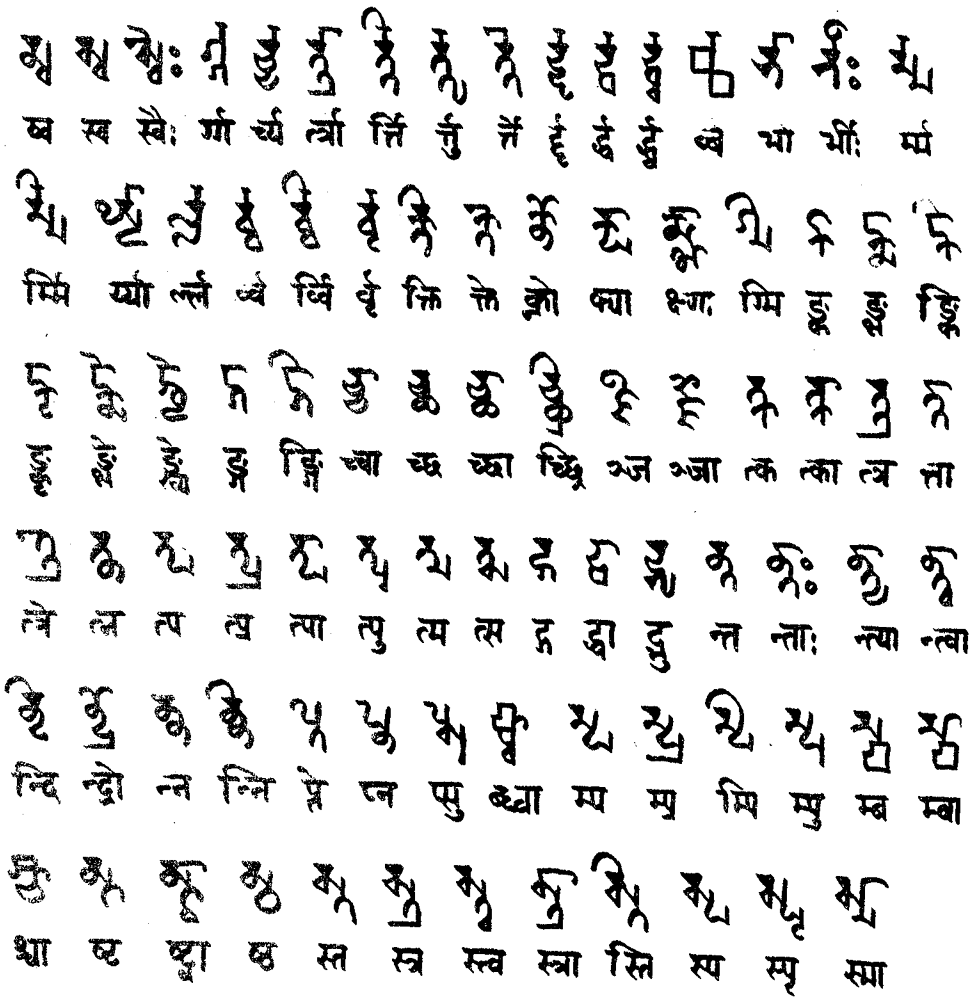


PLATE 6

पूर्व लिच्छवि लिपि



चाँगुको मानदेवको स्तम्भाभिलेखबाट -

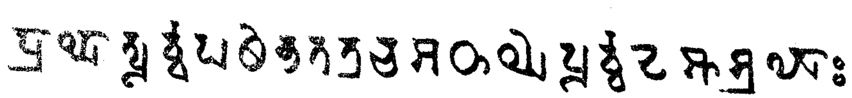
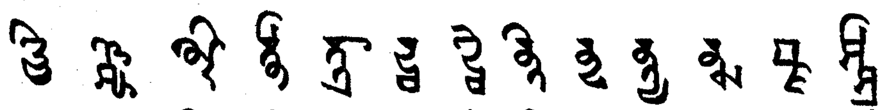


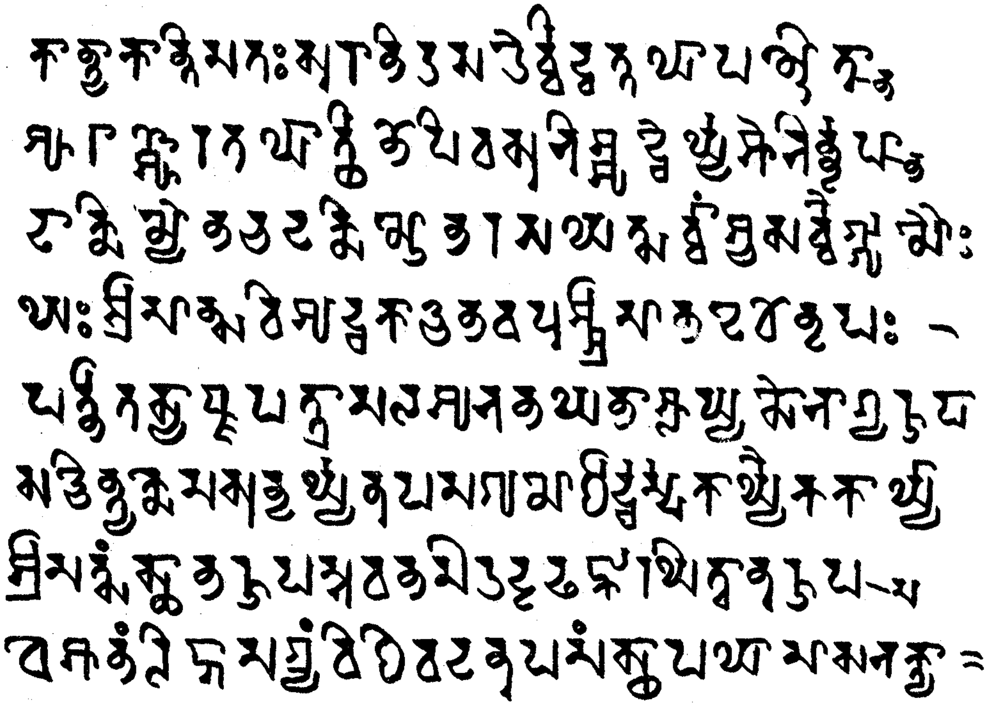
PLATE 8

पूर्व लिच्छवि लिपि



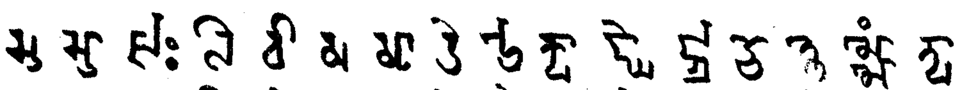
ञ्चि ञ्छू ण्डि त्नी त्मा ह्न ह्वे न्ति न्द न्त्य न्स ञ्ज इक्षी

क्षेमसुन्दरीको अभिलेख –



[लिपिचित्र ६]

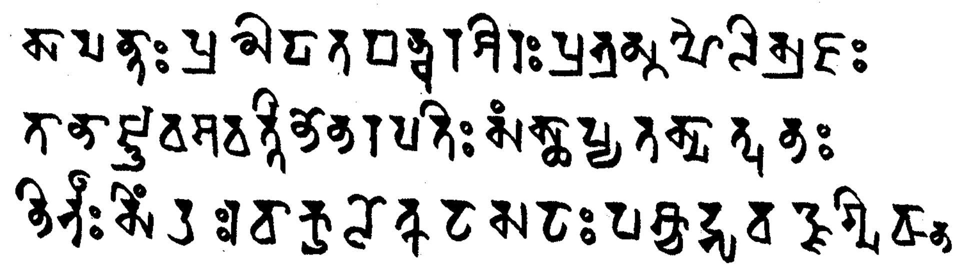
देउपाटनको रत्नसङ्घको अभिलेखबाट –



भ आ जा लि धी व वा हे हो क्त ह्रे ह्ना श्वा त्ने ण्णं

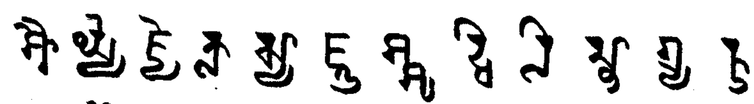
PLATE 7

पूर्व लिच्छवि लिपि



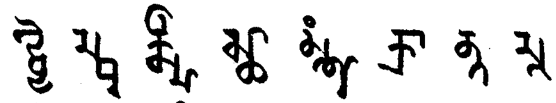
लाजिमपाटको नरवर्माको अभिलेखबाट –

[लिपिचित्र ५]



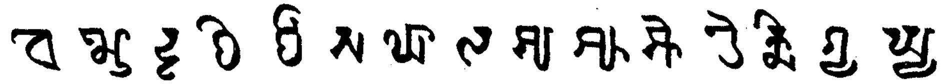
श्री र्य्यै ज्ये क्रू स्या ज्ञ श्शु द्धि लि म्ना ग्य्र रू

मानदेवले स्थापना गरेको लाजिमपाटको वामनको अभिलेखबाट –

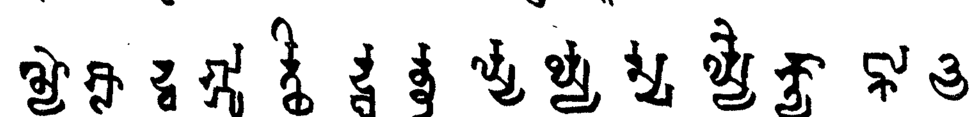


क्षै म्बु क्ष्मी स्था ण्णुं का न्त मू

मानदेवकी रानी क्षेमसुन्दरीले स्थापना गरेको लाजिमपाटको शिवलिङ्गको पादपीठबाट –



ऐ णा हृ धि धी म या ल शु शू ज्ञो है शि ग्य घ्य



ण्ये श्वा ह्व गुं र्थि द्ध न्नृ र्य्य ञ्यो र्म्य र्य्यै त्या ह्ना श्च

PLATE 9

पूर्व लिच्छविलिपि

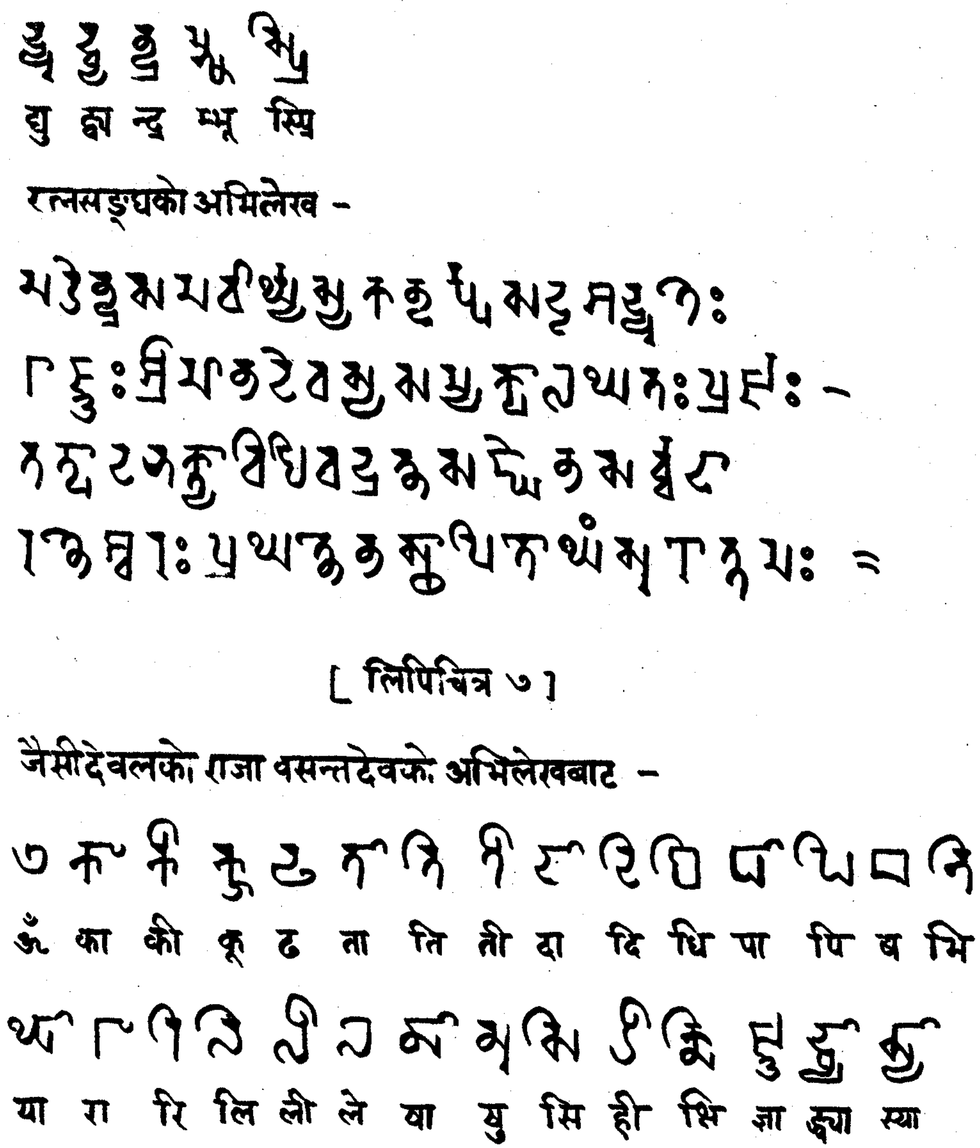


PLATE 10

पूर्व लिच्छवि लिपि

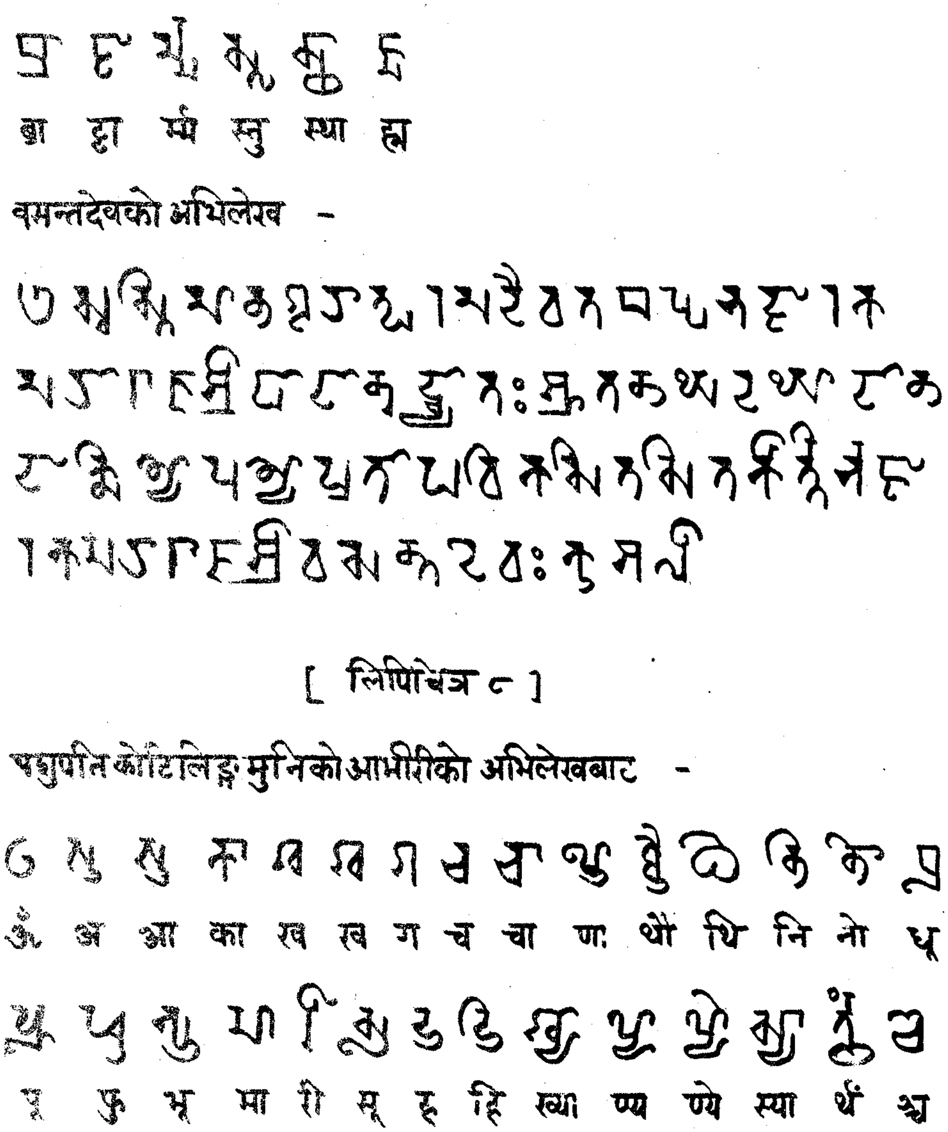
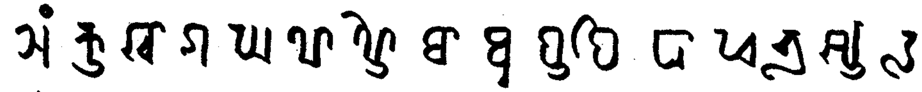


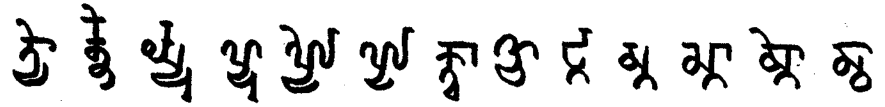
PLATE 12

[लिपिचित्र ९]

राजा गणदेवका पालाको पशुपतिको स्वामिवार्तको
अभिलेखबाट



ॐ कु खा ग घ ण णो था थु धा धि पा फ भृ ष्ठ ल



त्यो नौं र्खु ण्णु ण्यो ण्या ल्ला श्वा ह्रा ष्ट ष्टा ष्टो ष्ठा

स्वामिवार्तको अभिलेख –

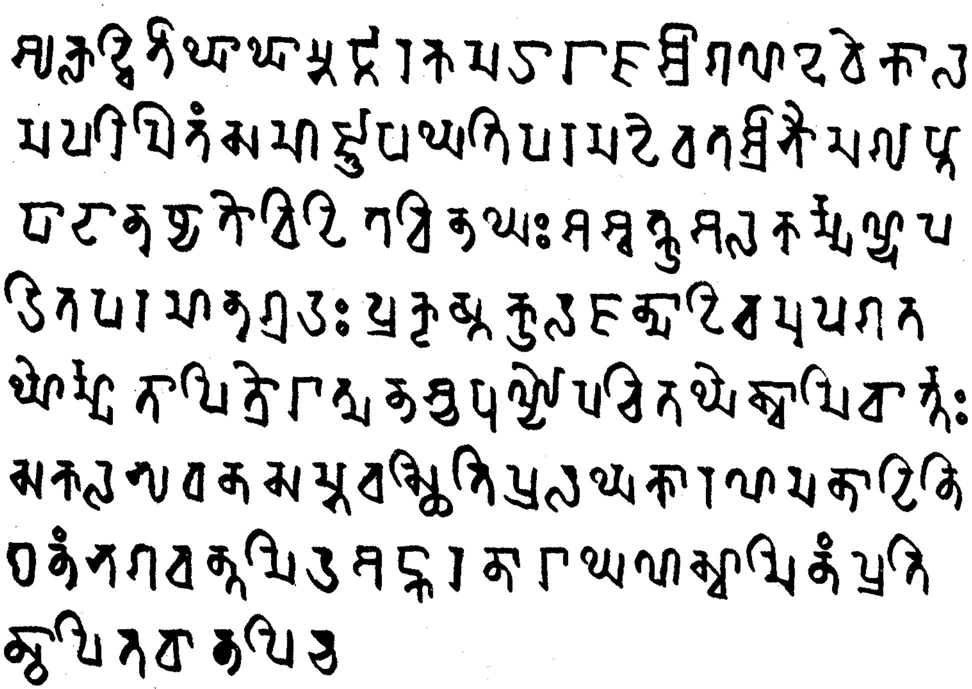
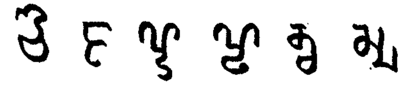


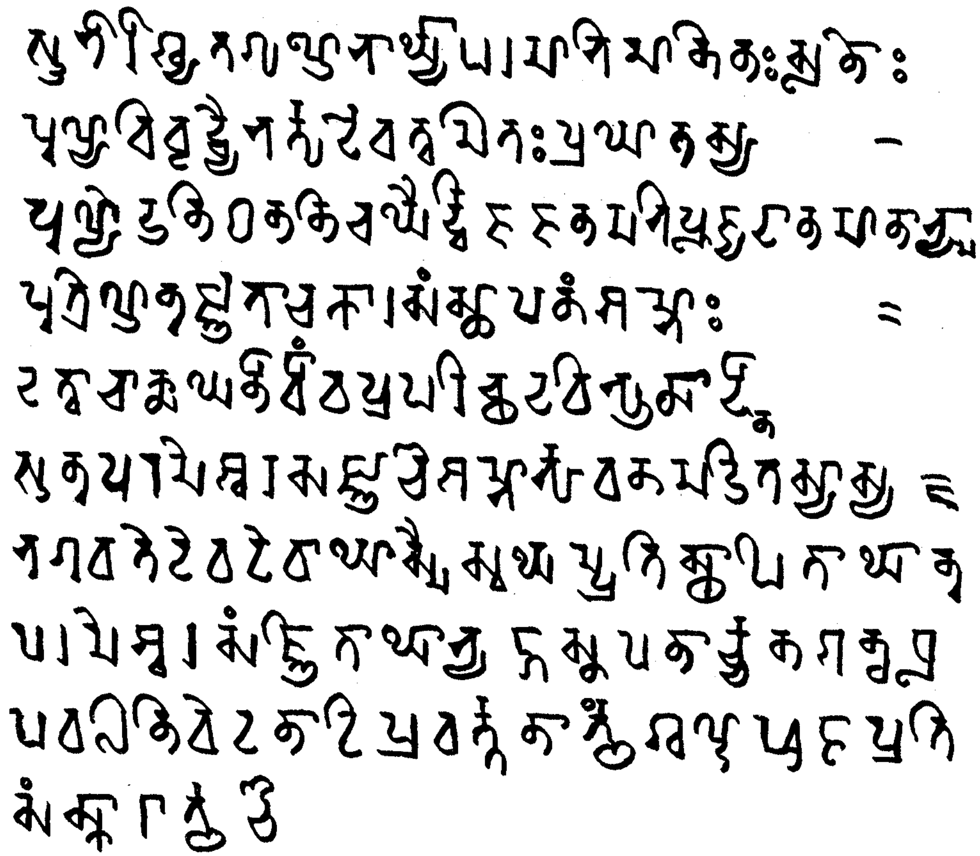
PLATE 11

पूर्व लिच्छवि लिपि



श्व ट्ट ण्ड ण्ढ न्ध ष्म

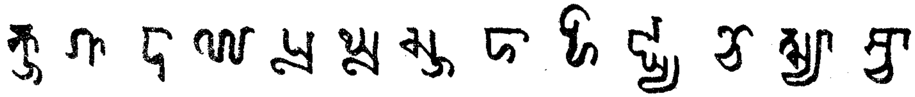
आभीरीको अभिलेख –



[लिपिचित्र ११]

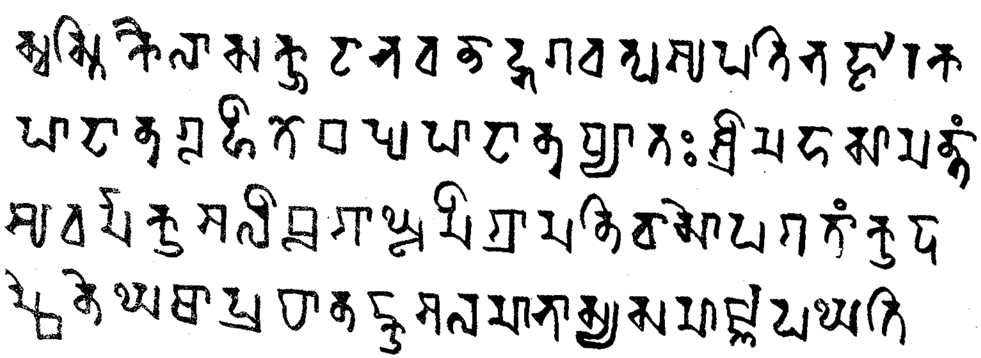
उत्तर लिच्छविलिपि

बुंगमतीको अंशुवर्माको अभिलेखबाट -



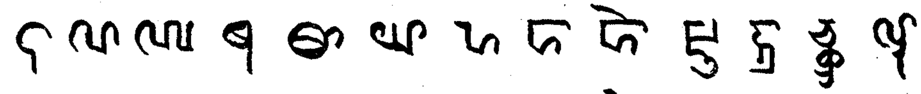
कू गा टु णा पू यू सू हा ही ड्ग्या श्च त्स्या श्वा

बुंगमतीको अंशुवर्माको अभिलेख -



[लिपिचित्र १०]

राजा शिवदेवको बुढानीलकण्ठको अभिलेखबाट



टु ण णा थु था या ह हा हो ज्ञा ड्डा च्छु ण्ड

शिवदेवको अभिलेख -

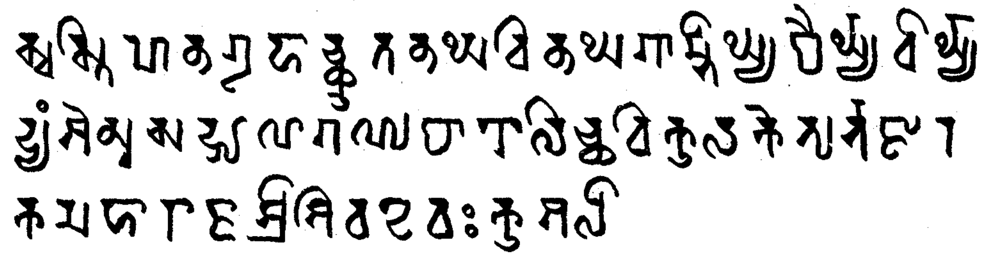
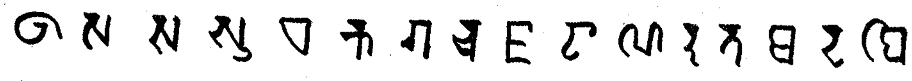


PLATE 16

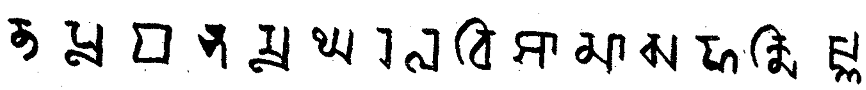
[लिपिचित्र १२]

उत्तर लिच्छविलिपि

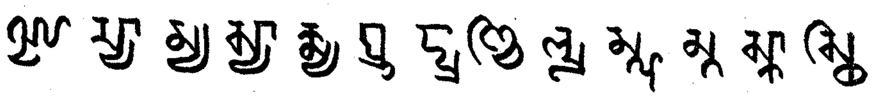
पाटन छिन्नमस्ताको ध्रुवदेवको अभिलेखबाट



ॐ अ अ आ ए क ग च ज ट ण ड त थ द धि



न पू ब भ मू य र ल वि शा षा स ह क्षि ज्ञा



ण्या म्या ध्य स्या ष्य धु ह्र ध्वि ल्मू ष्णु ह स्का स्थि

छिन्नमस्ताको ध्रुवदेवको अभिलेख

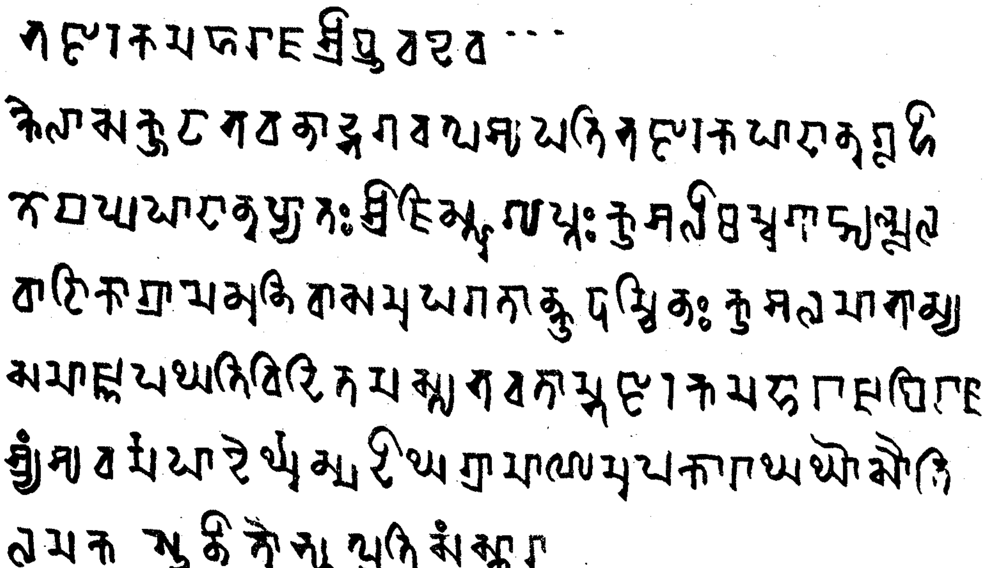
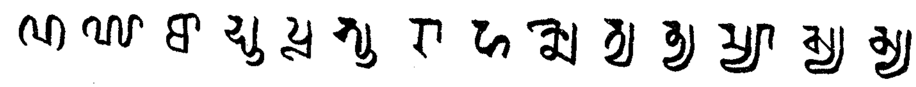


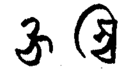
PLATE 15

उत्तर लिच्छविलिपि

काठमाडौं लगनको दूतक राजपुत्र विक्रमसेन भएको अभिलेखबाट

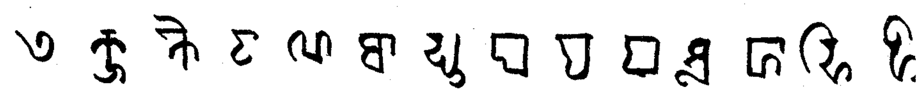


ण णा था दू पू भू रा ह क्षे त्य न्य म्या स्य ष्य

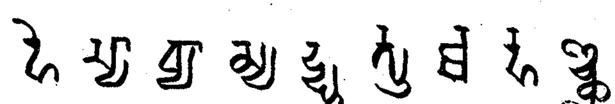


श्चा श्चि

पशुपति चौवाटोको अंशुवर्माको अभिलेखबाट —



ॐ कू कै ट ण था दू ध ध ब घू ह्रा हि ह्रि



हे म्या व्या ष्य द्दू न्नू र्थ हे श्छू

पशुपतिको चौवाटोको अंशुवर्माको अभिलेख ...

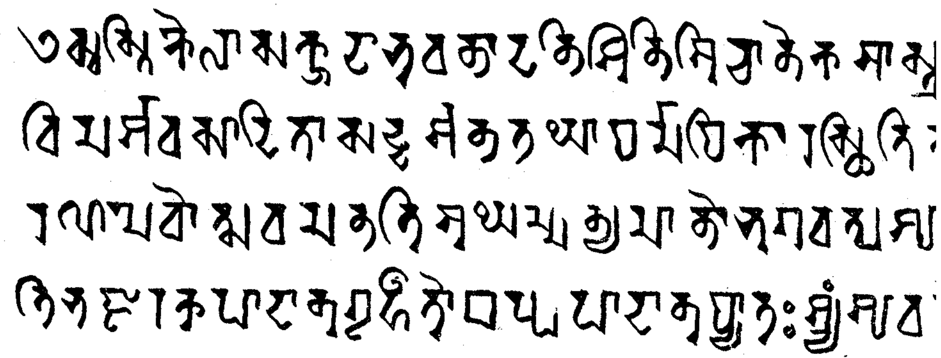
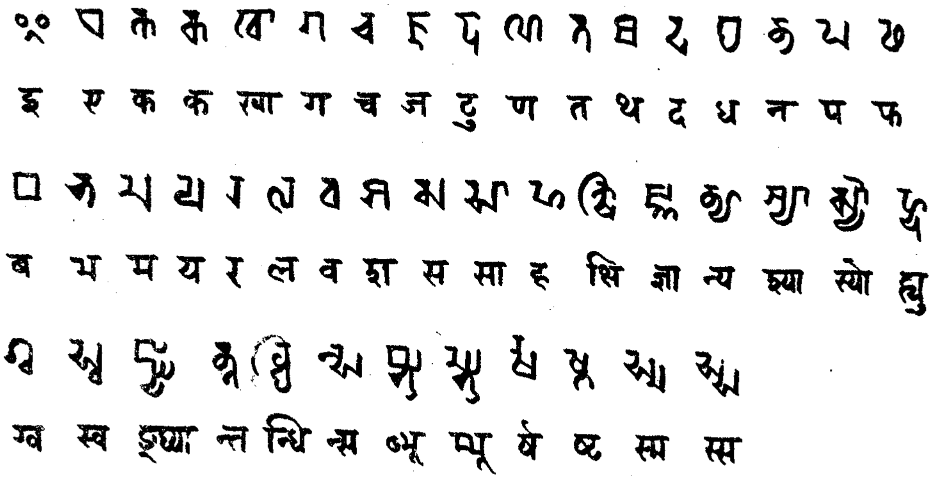


PLATE 18

[लिपिचित्र १४]

(ग) लिच्छवि लिपि

पशुपति वज्रघरको नरेन्द्रदेवको अभिलेखबाट



पशुपति वज्रघरको अभिलेख –

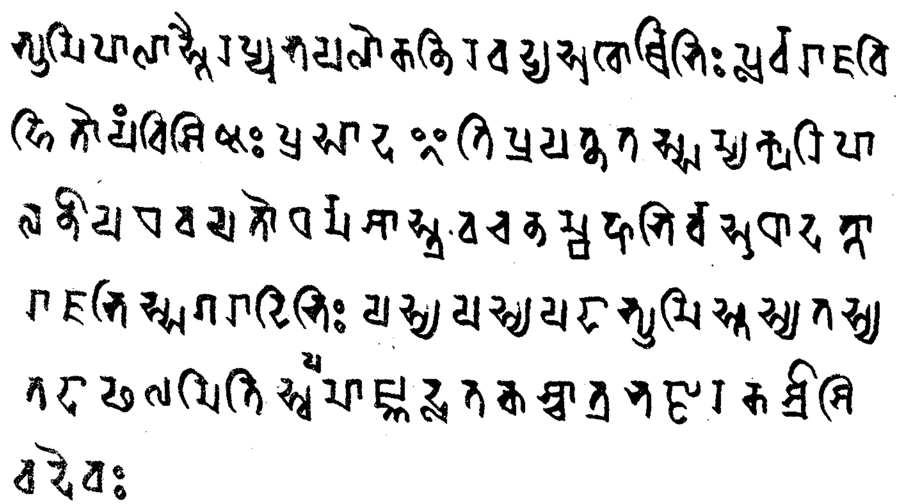
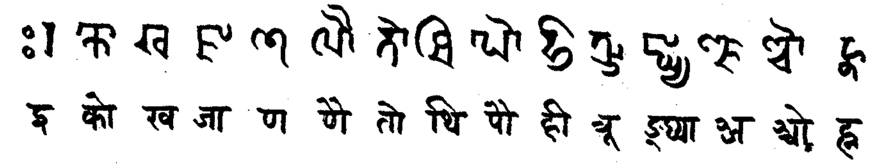


PLATE 17

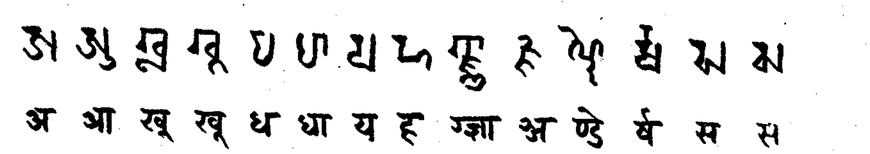
[लिपिचित्र १३]

(ग) लिच्छवि लिपि

पाटन मीननाथको ध्रुवदेवको अभिलेखबाट



पशुपति छत्रचण्डेश्वरको जिष्णुगुप्तको अभिलेखबाट –



छत्रचण्डेश्वरको अभिलेख –

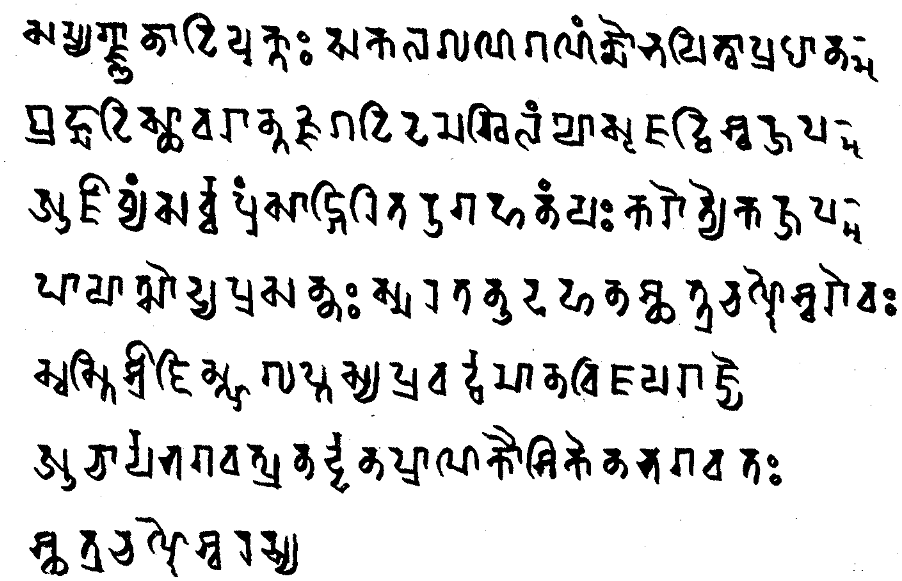
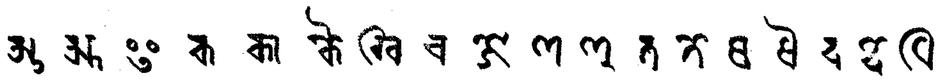


PLATE 20

[लिपिचित्र १६]

उत्तर लिच्छवि लिपि

नाडपत्रमा लेखिएको स्कन्दपुराणबाट



आ आ इ क का के खि च जे ण णु त तो थ थे द दे धि



धै नु प पु बु भा भे मा मि मु या ये र रा ल व सा शा ष

स्कन्दपुराणबाट –

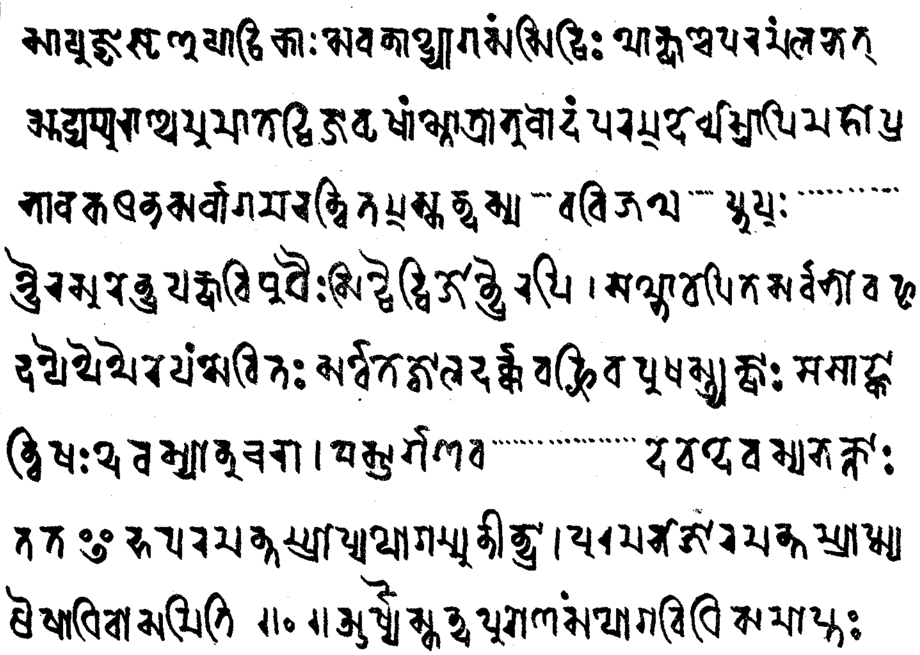
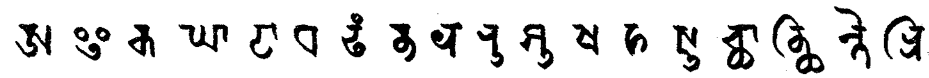


PLATE 19

[लिपिचित्र १५]

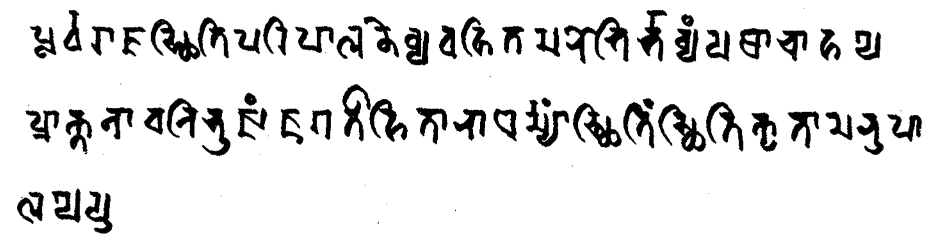
उत्तर लिच्छवि लिपि

पाटन मीननाथको दूतक विजयदेव भएको अभिलेखबाट

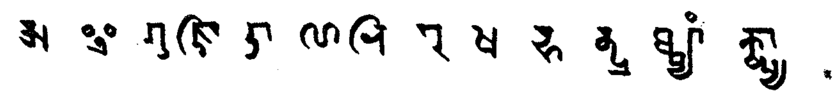


अ इ क घा ट ध ढं न न नु यु ष ह ज्ञा च्छा न्थि न्ते न्नि

पाटन मीननाथको अभिलेख –



पशुपतिको द्वितीय जयदेवको अभिलेखबाट –



अ इ गु जि डा ण नि रे ष ह न्द श्व्यां क्ष्या

पशुपतिको द्वितीय जयदेवको अभिलेख –

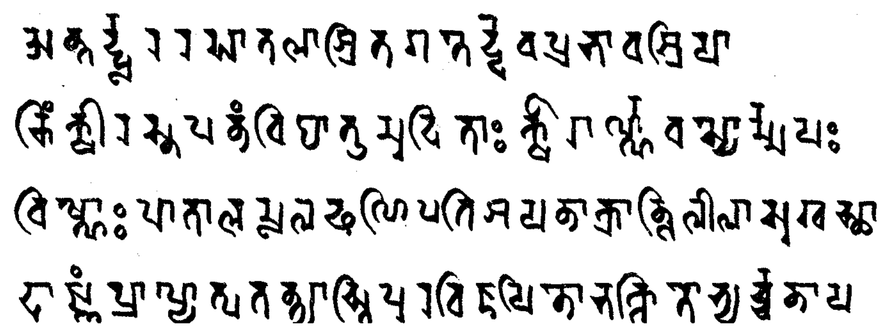


PLATE 22

[लिपिचित्र १७]
लिपिको विकास

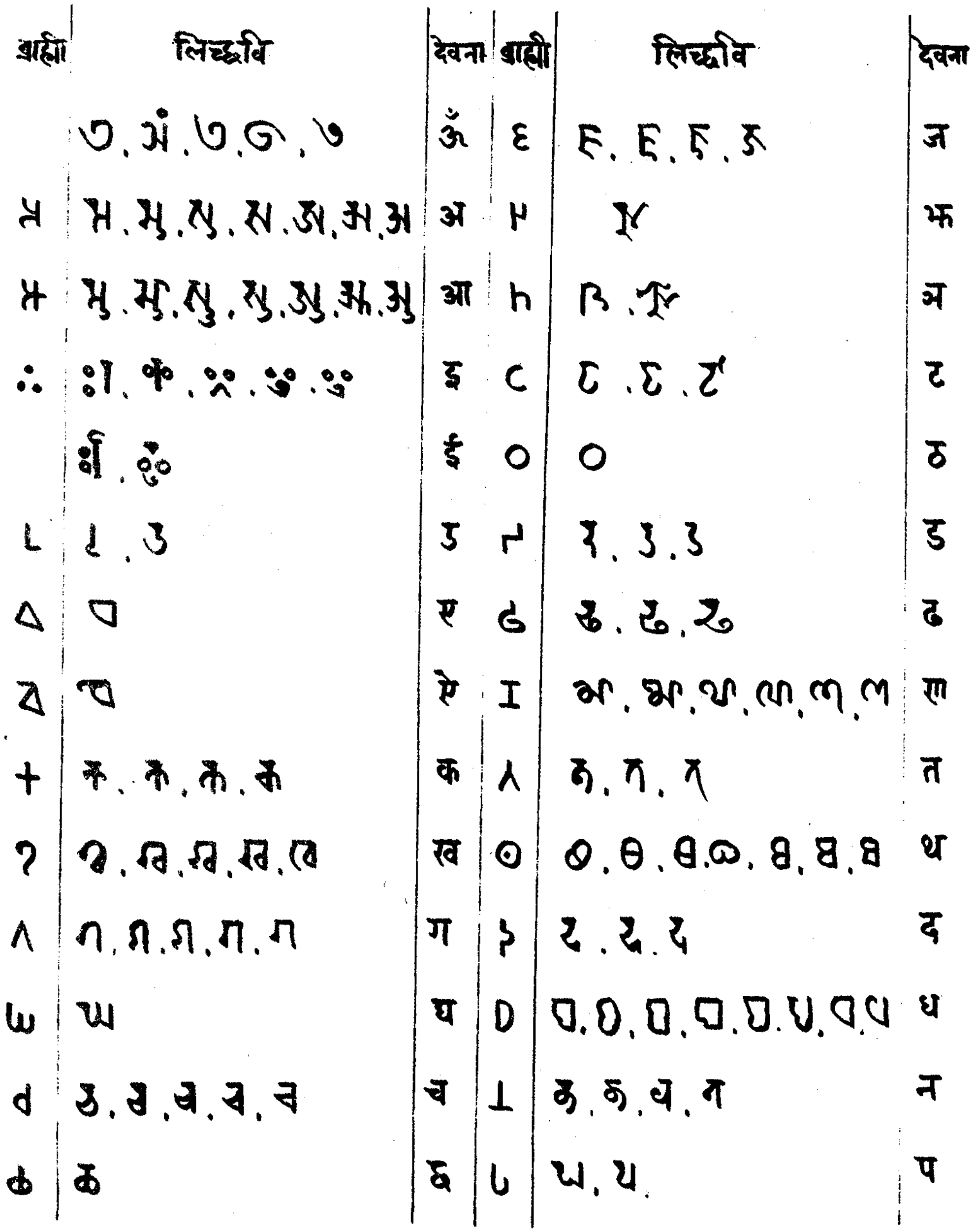


PLATE 21

लिच्छविलिपि
जापानको होर्युजी मठमा रहेको उष्णीषविजयधारिणी भन्ने ताडपत्रको
पुस्तकको अन्तिम पत्रमा टिइएको वर्णमाला



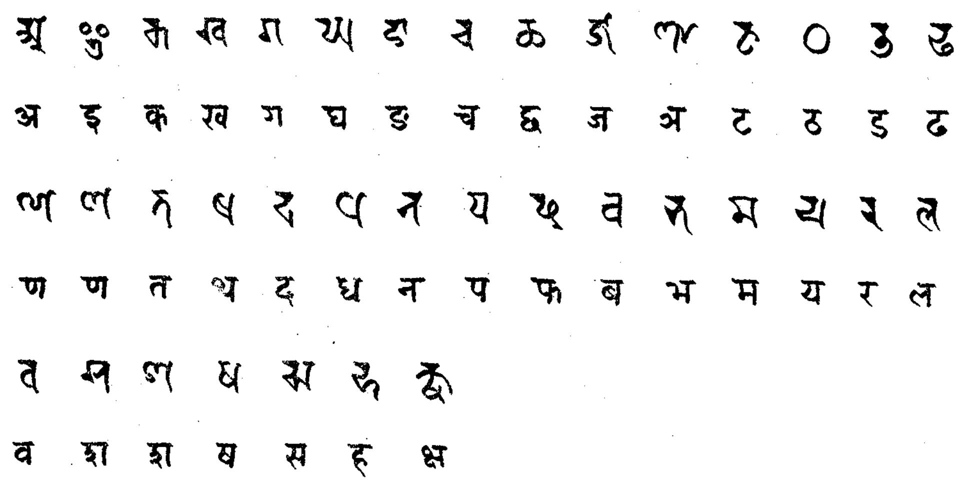
PLATE 24

[लिपिचित्र १८]

प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको लङ्कावतार भन्ने पुस्तको पत्रबाट उद्धृत

विक्रमको दशौं शताब्दी



लङ्कावतारको अन्तिम पत्रबाट —

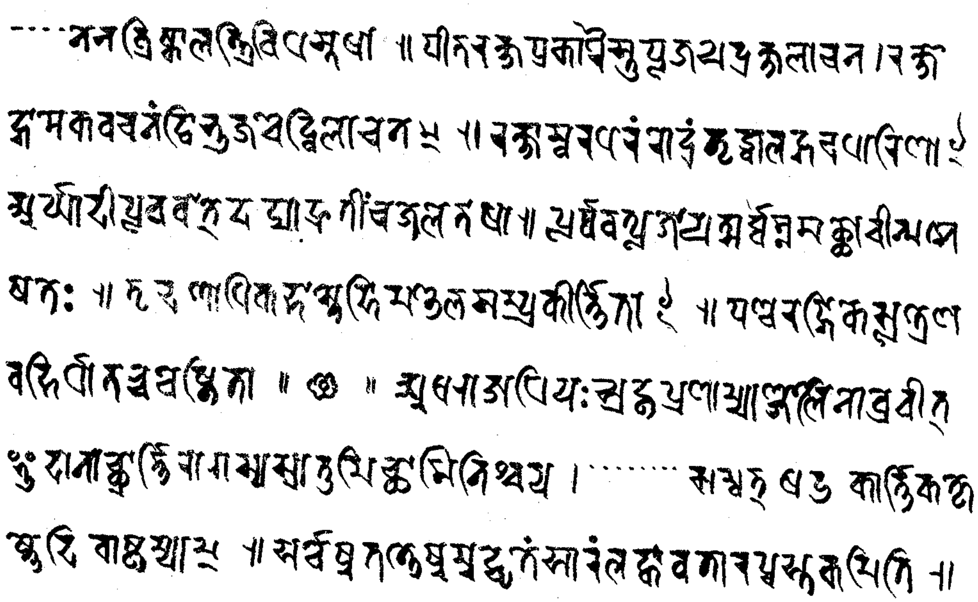


PLATE 23

लिपिको विकास

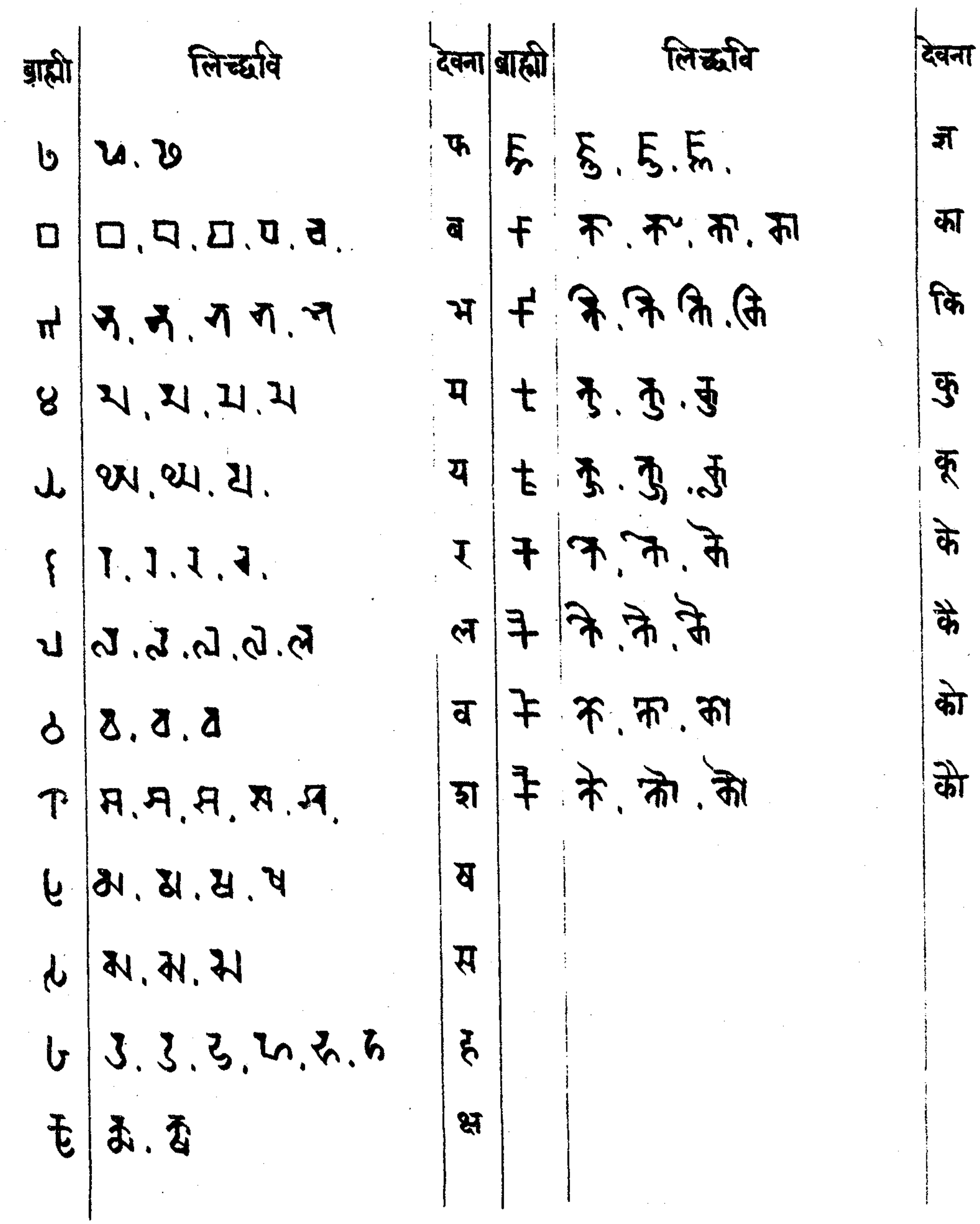


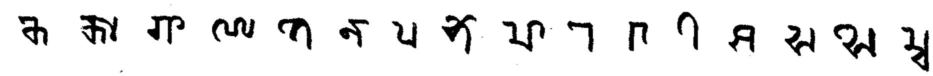
PLATE 25

[लिपिचित्र १९] क

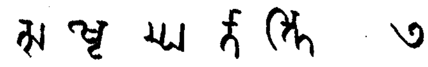
प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि

पाटन सुनधाराको सं १०० (वि स १०३७) को अभिलेखबाट

विक्रमको ग्यारौं शताब्दी

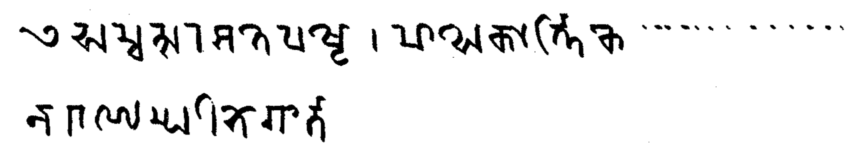


के का गा णा ते न प भो मा रे रा रि श स से म्व



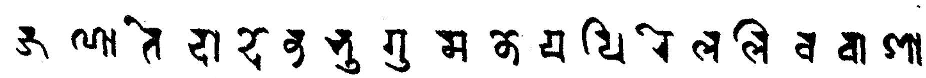
त्म ष्ट म्प र्त र्ति ॐ

अभिलेख –

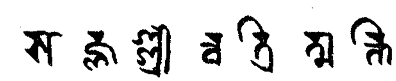


[लिपिचित्र २०]

पाटन कुम्भेश्वर घाँयूबुको गुणकामदेवको सं १०७ (वि सं १०४४) को अभिलेखबाट



ज णा ते दा दे न भु गु म ने य यि रे ल लि व वा शा

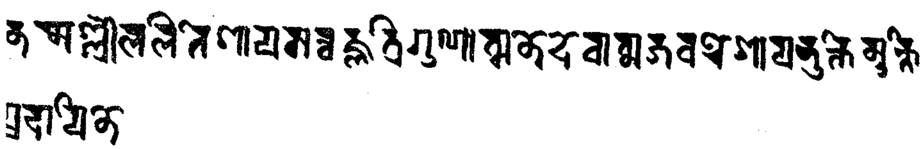


स श श्री र्व त्रि त्म क्ति

PLATE 26

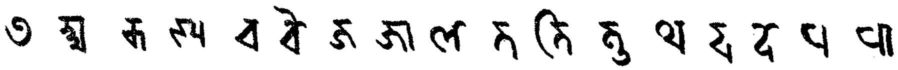
प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि

पाटन घाँयूबुको अभिलेखबाट –

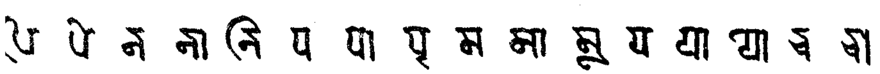


[लिपिचित्र २१]

भक्तपुर तौमढीटोल भैरवस्थानको निर्भयदेवको सं १२५ (वि सं १०६२) को अभिलेखबाट



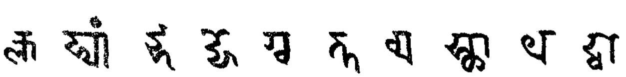
ॐ अ क ख च चै ज जा ञा त ति तु थ द दे ध धा



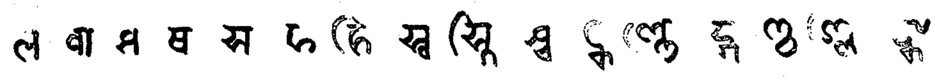
धि धे न ना नि प पा पृ म मा मू य या यो र रा



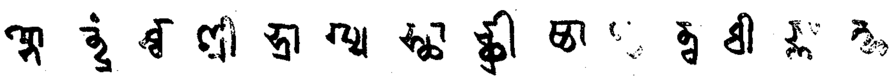
ला लि वा वि शु शि स हा ज्ञा त्र त्रि प्र श्री स्तु म्व



क्र स्यां र्भ ज्ये ग्व त्त व्य स्या र्थ द्वा

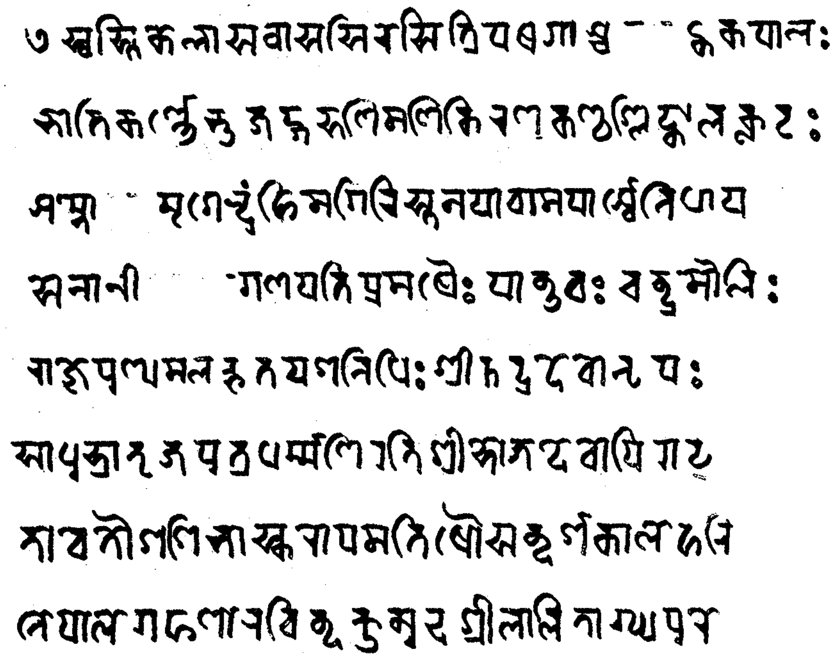


ल वा श ष स ह हि स्व स्नि श्च क्व ण्ण न्न ष्ठ म्भ

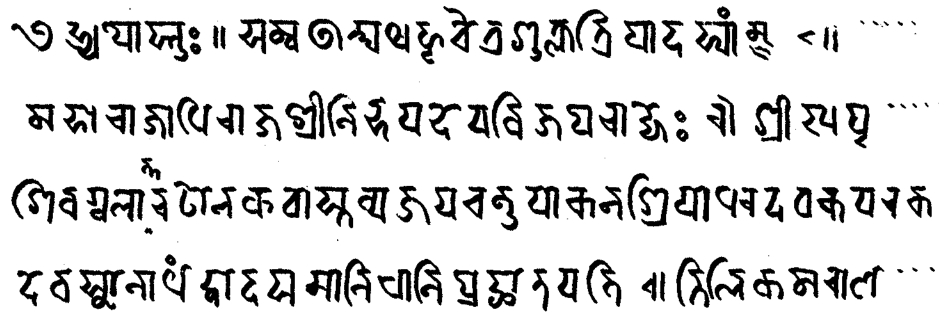


म्बो र्द्रं श्वें श्री भा र्व्य स्था च्छी ष्ठा ण्ड न्थ ध्धी ज्ञा

पाटन त्यागल गच्छानर्नीको अभिलेख –

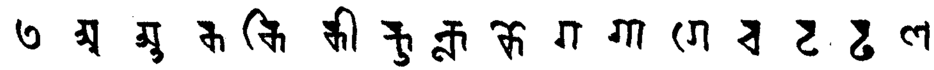


भक्तपुर तौमढीको अभिलेख –

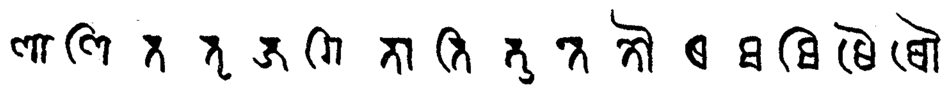


[लिपिचित्र २१]

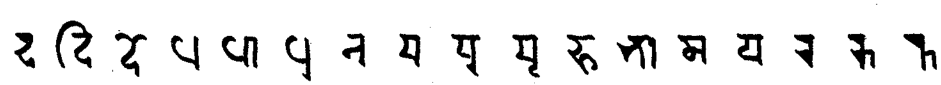
पाटन त्यागलटोल गच्छानर्नीको भोजदेव रुद्रदेवका पालाको अभिलेखबाट



ॐ अ आ क कि की कु कू के ग गा गे च ट ठ ण



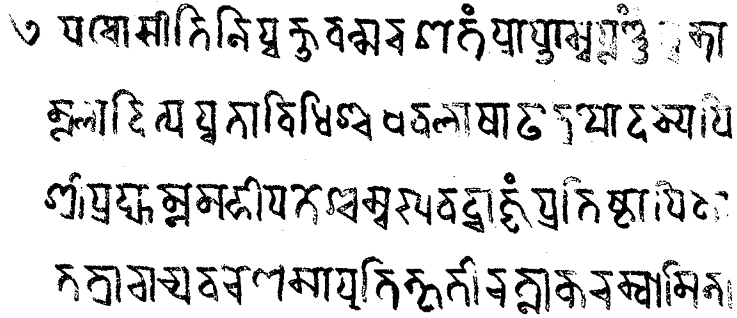
णा णि त तृ ज गि ता ति तु ते तौ थ थ थि थै थो



द दि दे ध धा धु न प पु पृ फ भा म य र रु रु

प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि

पाटन थैनाटोलको अभिलेख

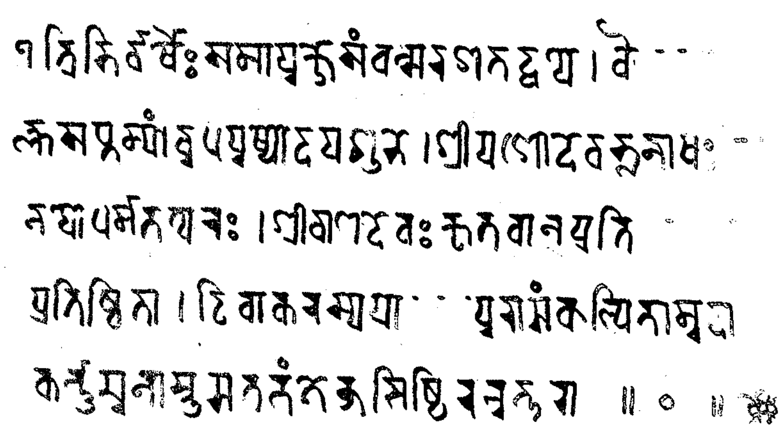


पाटन सुन... को वाणदेवका पालाको सूर्यका पादपीठको अभिलेखबाट



ॐ ध तु बु भि भू यु र श स

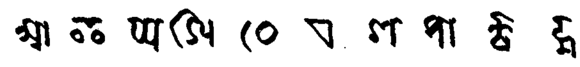
पाटन सुनधाराको सूर्यका पादपीठको अभिलेख



[लिपिचित्र २३]

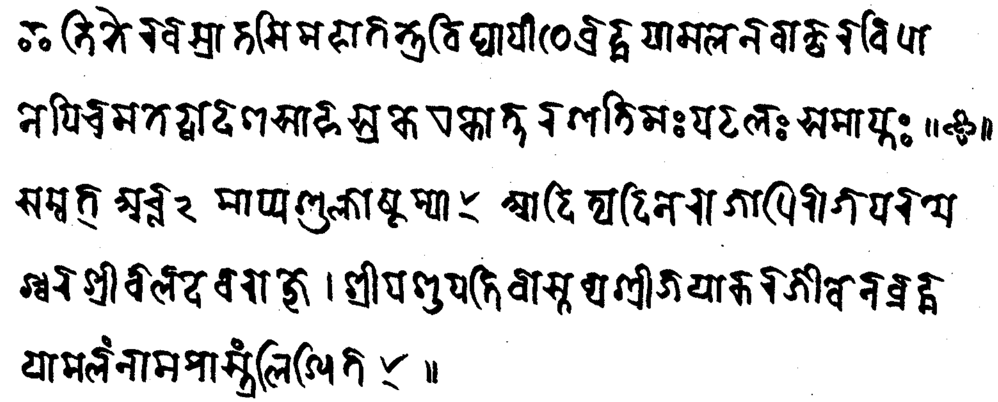
प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि
विक्रमको बाह्रौं शताब्दी

ताडपत्रमा लेखिएको ब्रह्मयामलतन्त्रबाट



आ इ घ खि ठे ए श शा क्ष ह्म

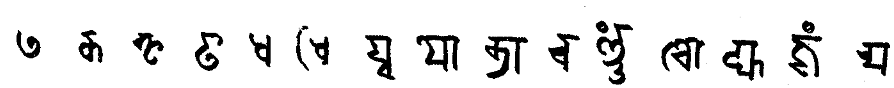
ब्रह्मयामलतन्त्रबाट –



[लिपिचित्र २४]

पाटन थैनाटोलको प्रद्युम्नकामदेवका पालाको अभिलेखबाट

विक्रमको बाह्रौं शताब्दी



ॐ क कृ ढ ध धि यु यो भा र र्ण श्वा द्यु ज्यं ज्य

PLATE 32

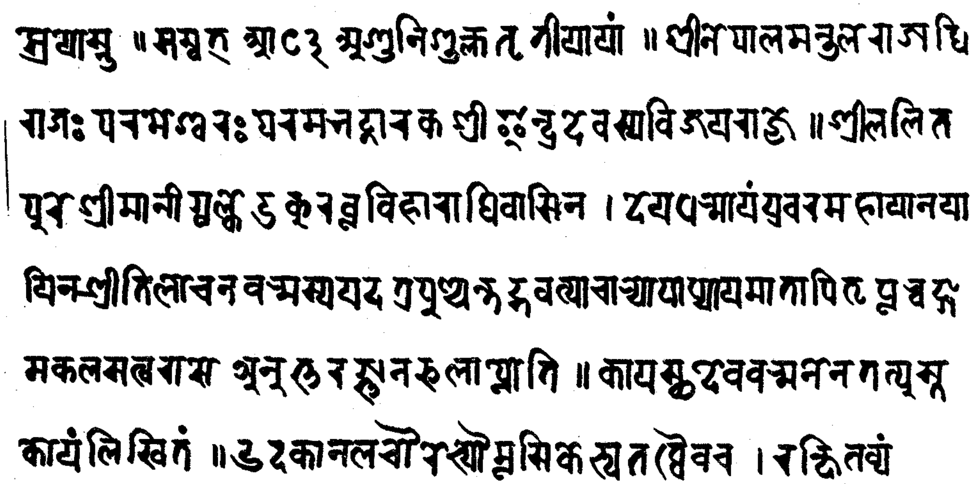
प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि

ताडपत्रको पञ्चरक्षा पुस्तकबाट



अ आ उ अ इ क खि च जा धि पु फ भ थै ञा थि

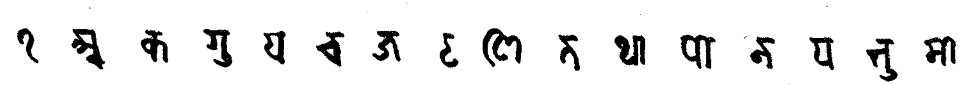
पञ्चरक्षा पुस्तकको –



[लिपिचित्र २६]

पाटन वलटोलको रुद्रदेवको पालाको अभिलेखबाट

विक्रमको तेह्रौं शताब्दी



ॐ अ क गु घ च ज ट णि त था धा न प भु मा

PLATE 31

[लिपिचित्र २५]

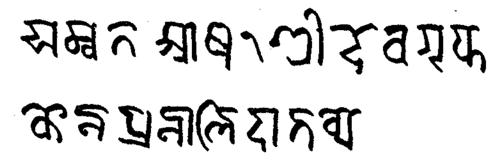
प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि

काठमाडौं नरदेवीको जलद्रोणीको अभिलेखबाट

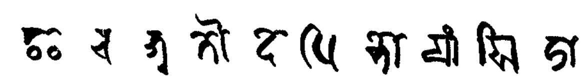


आ गु थ न लि स प्र

नरदेवीको जलद्रोणीको अभिलेख –

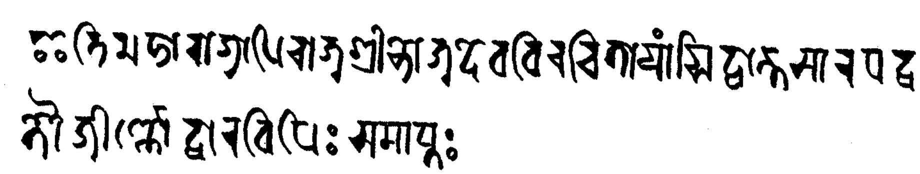


ताडपत्रमा लेखिएको सिद्धान्तसार पद्धतिबाट –

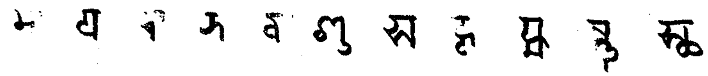


इ च ज तौ दे धि भो यां सि हा

सिद्धान्तसार पद्धतिबाट -

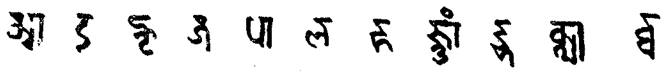


प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि



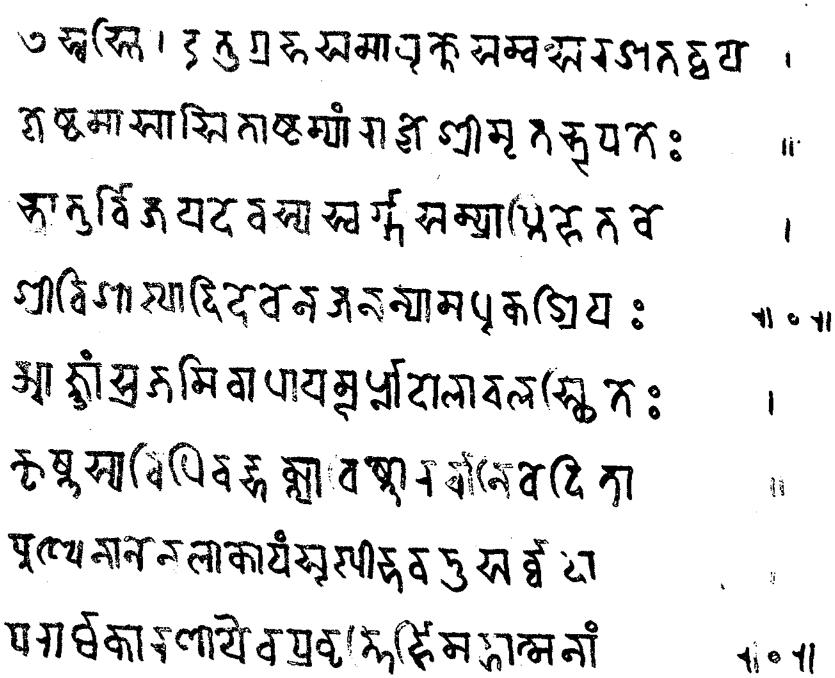
मा य रा रु व शु स ह्न ह्ल ष्णु स्थ

चाँगुनारायणको अमृतदेवका पालाको अभिलेखबाट –



आ ऋ कृ ज धा ल ह ह्रां द्ध त्त्या थं

चाँगुनारायणका अमृतदेवका पालाका अभिलेख –

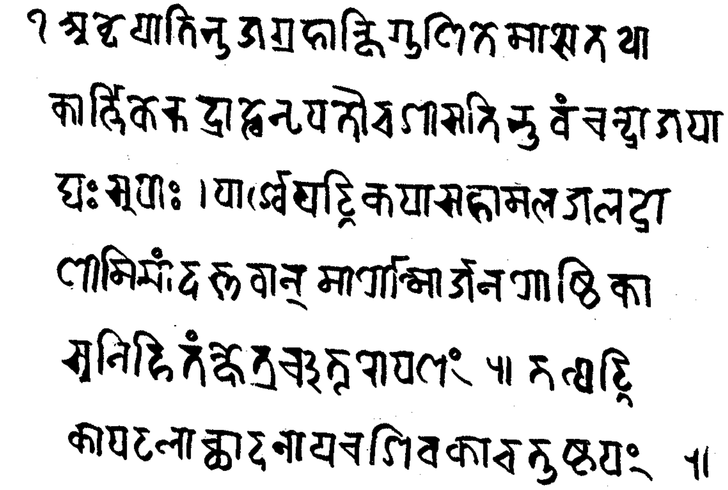


प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि



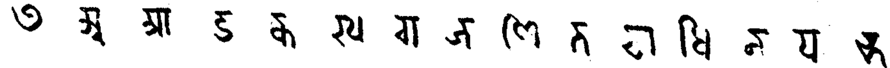
या रु ला व शि मु ह्ना क्षि शे श्च च्छा त्य ष्ट घ्य र्ति

पाटन वलटोलको अभिलेख –



[लिपिचित्र २७]

भक्तपुर भमहिटीटोलका टुँडेधाराको अमृतदेवका पालाको अभिलेखबाट

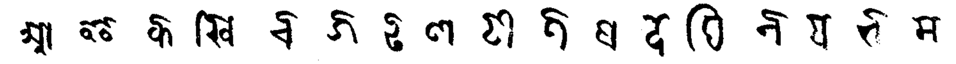


ॐ अ आ उ क ख ग ज णि त दा धि न प भ

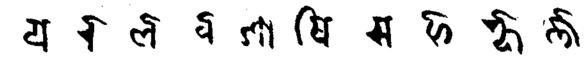
[लिपिचित्र २७]

प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि

ताडपत्रको वृहज्जातकसंक्षेपटीकाबाट

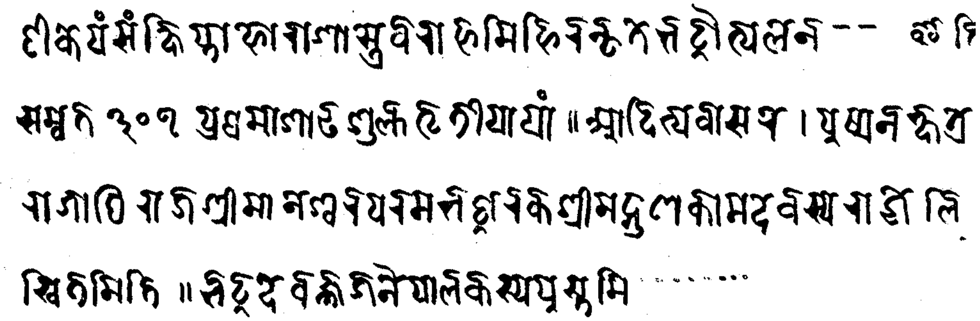


आ इ क खि च ज ढ ण टा त थ दे धि न प भ म



य र ल व शा षि स ह क्ष ज्ञ

वृहज्जातकसंक्षेपटीकाको –

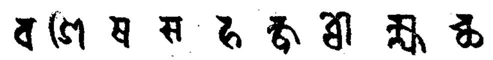


[लिपिचित्र २८]

देउपाटनको सरस्वतीको पादपीठमा रहेका विजयपालका अभिलेखबाट



ॐ अ क खि गा ज ढे णा त ध न पा बु भ म या र ल



व शि ष स ह क्ष ब्यो त्य च्छ

देउपाटनको सरस्वतीको पादपीठको अभिलेख

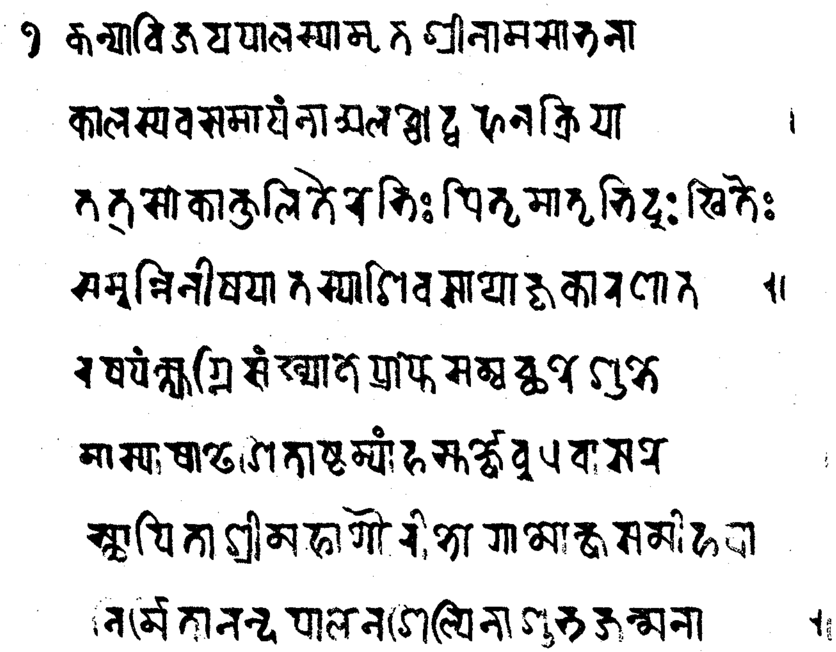


PLATE 37

[लिपिचित्र ३०]
प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि
ताडपत्रको पञ्चरक्षा पुस्तकबाट
विक्रमको चौधौं शताब्दी

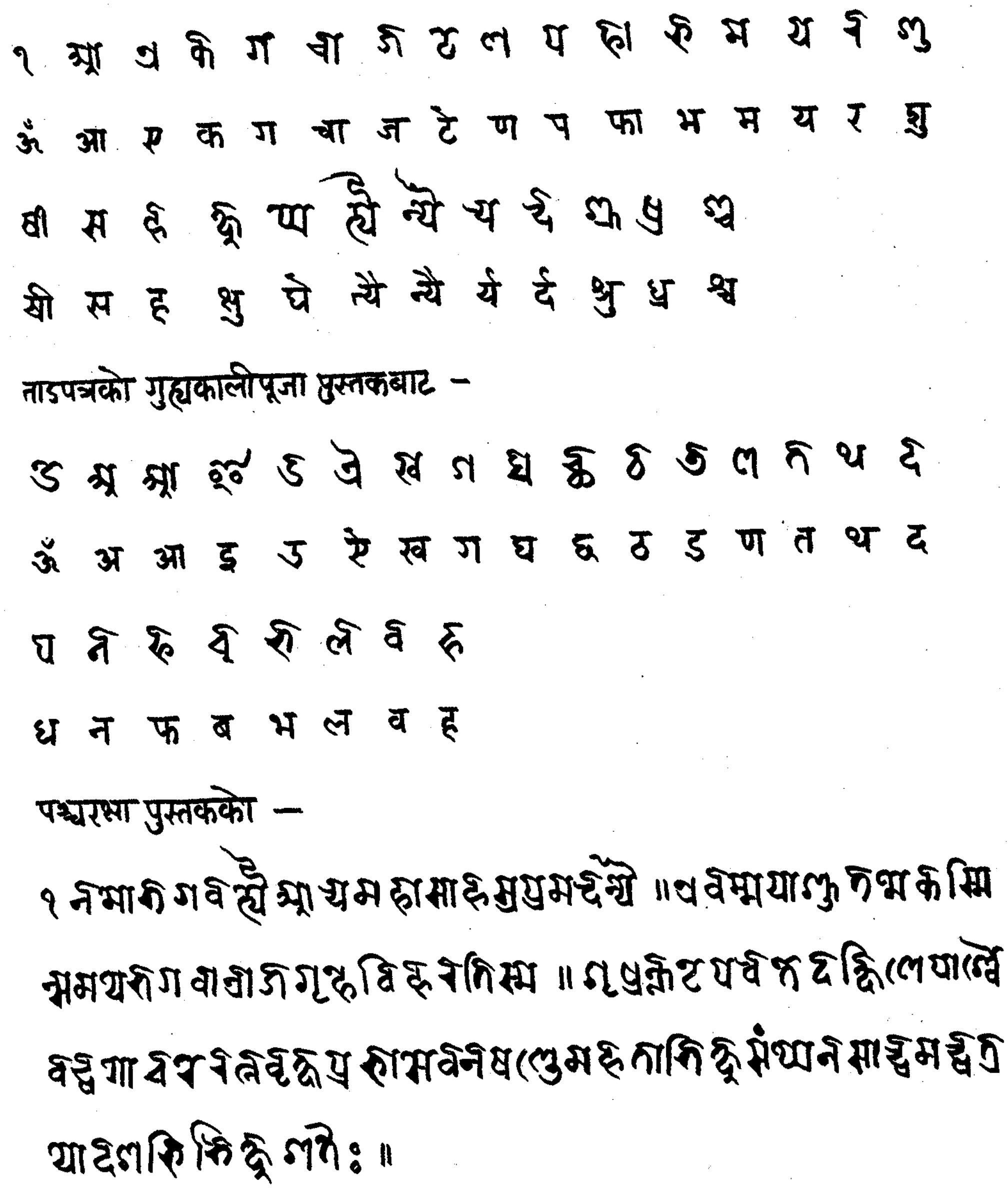
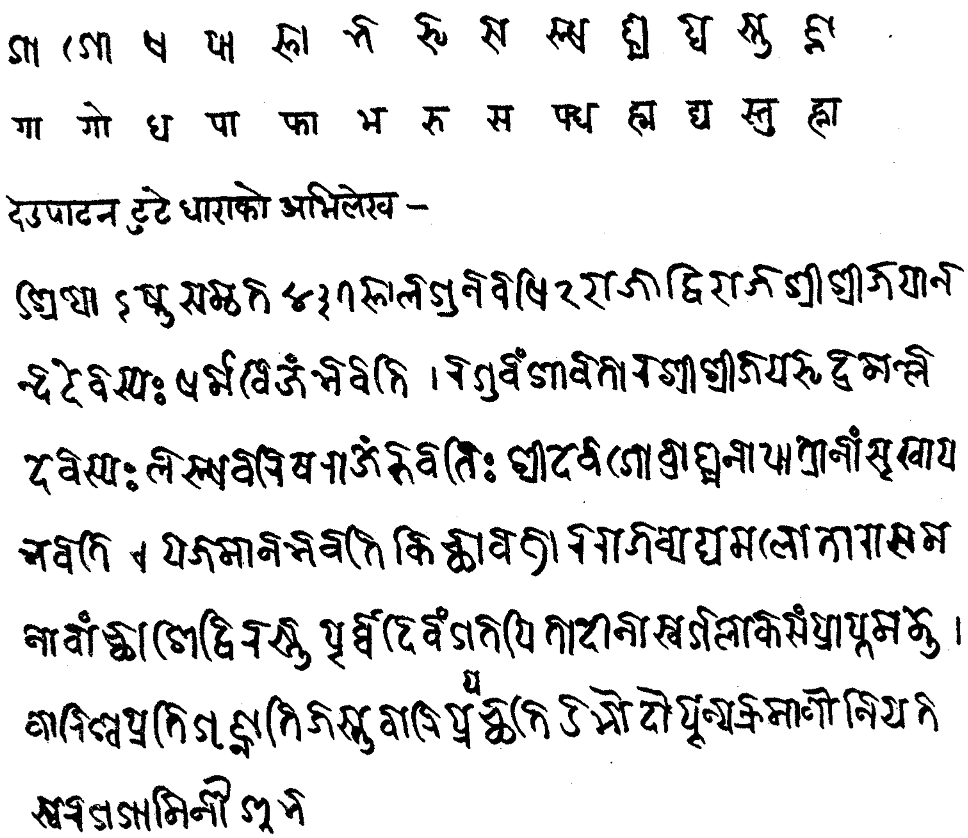
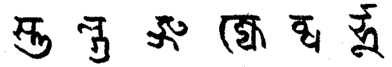


PLATE 38

[लिपिचित्र ३१]
प्राचीन नेवारी लिपि
देउपाटन ढुंटेधाराको रुद्रमल्लका पालाको

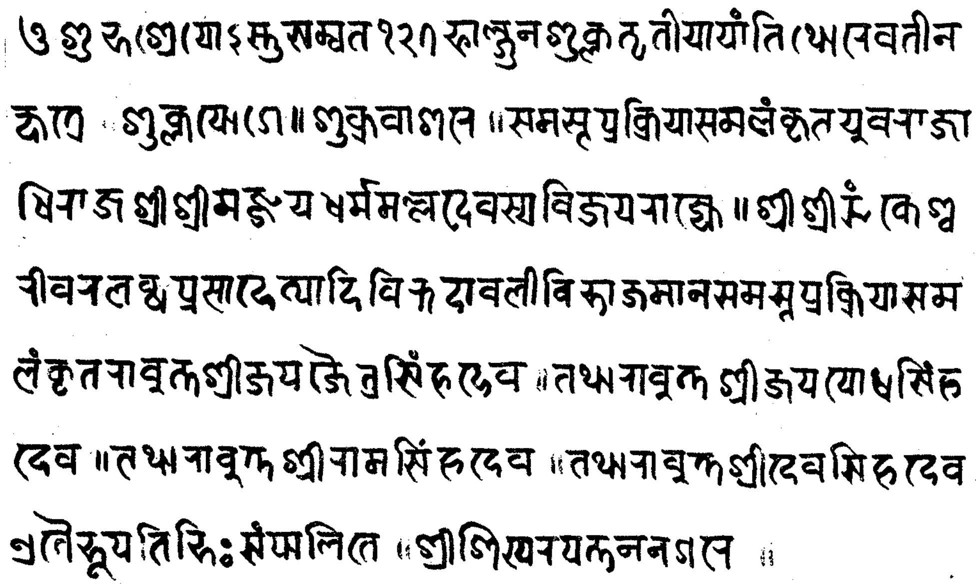


मध्यकाल नेवारी लिपि



स्नु ल्गु ज्ज ज्ये ब्ध र्भूँ

फर्पिङ् खासिटोलको अभिलेख –



[लिपिचित्र ३४]
पशुपतिको यक्षमल्लका पालाको
विक्रमको सोह्रौं शताब्दी

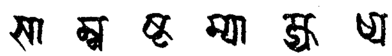


अ क गु ज ड ढ ण प भु भो म य र सू स्व [illegible] य

[लिपिचित्र ३२]
मध्यकाल नेवारी लिपि
पाटनसुनधाराको धर्ममल्लका पालाको अभिलेखबाट
विक्रमको पन्ध्रौं शताब्दी

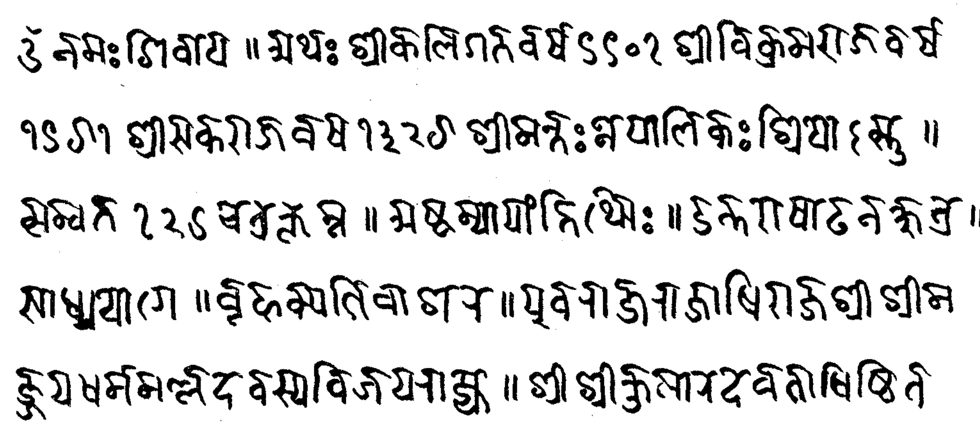


ॐ अ आ उ क गे चे ति ज थ न पा म य रा स



सा म्न ष्ट म्या ज्ये ध्य

पाटन सुनधाराको धर्ममल्लको अभिलेख –



[लिपिचित्र ३३]
फर्पिङ् खासिटोलको अभिलेखबाट

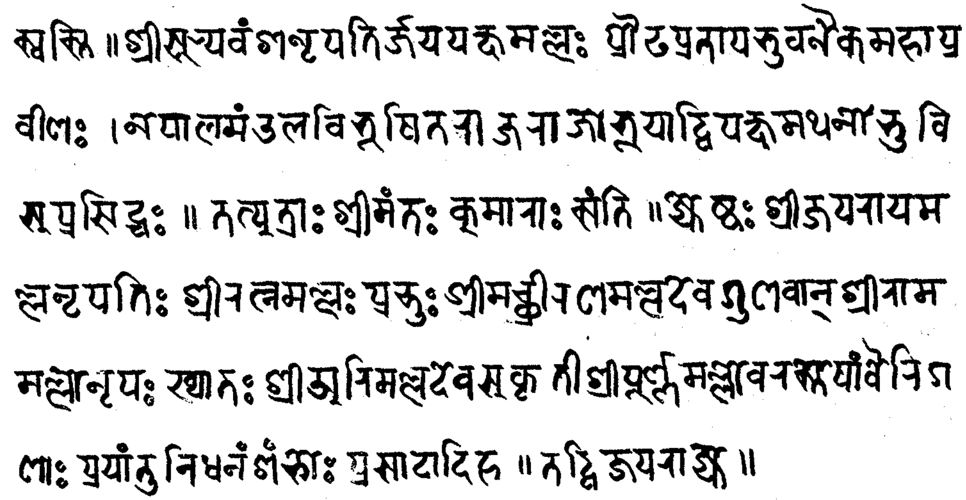


ॐ ए के ख ग ज र्भं ते थो दा ध न फा ह रु

PLATE 41

मध्यकाल नेवारी लिपि

पशुपतिको यक्षमल्लका पालाको अभिलेख



[लिपिचित्र २५]
नेवारी लिपि
ताडपत्रमा लेखिएको नागरसर्वस्व भन्ने पुस्तकबाट
विक्रमको सत्रौं शताब्दी

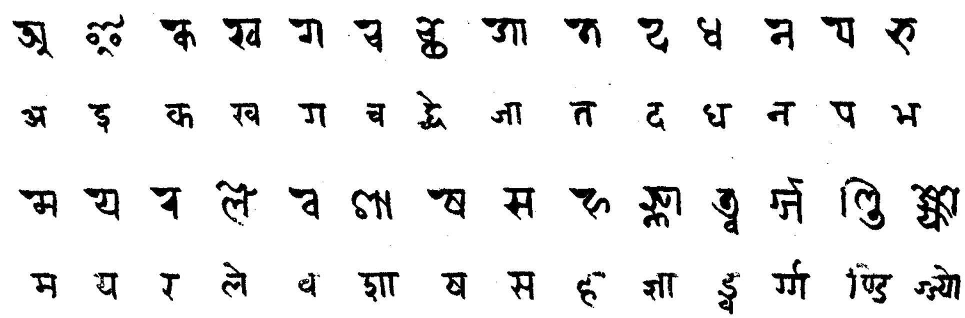
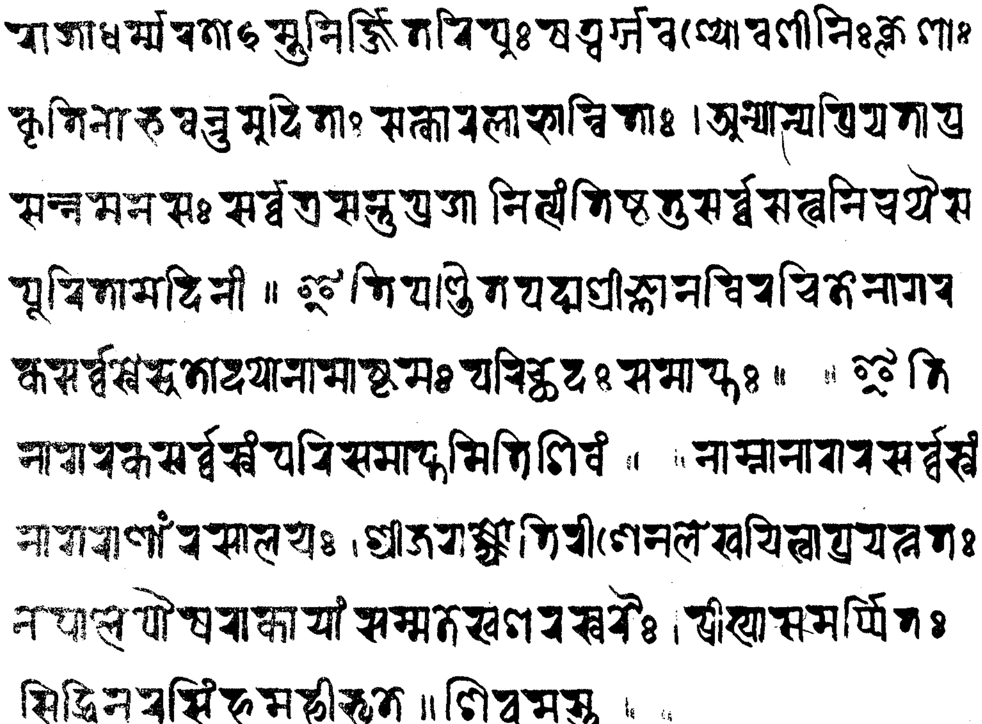


PLATE 42

नेवारी लिपि

नागरसर्वस्व भन्ने पुस्तकबाट



[लिपिचित्र ३५]

पाल्सोकागतमा लेखिएको शतस हस्तिकापञ्चपार्श्व भन्ने पुस्तकबाट
विक्रमको अठारौं शताब्दी

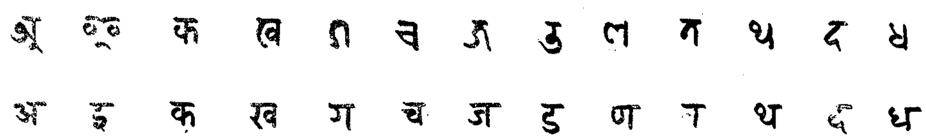
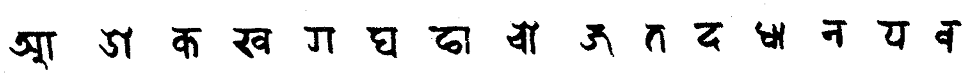


PLATE 44

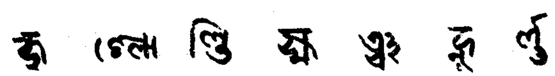
लिपिचित्र ३७

नेवारी लिपि

हनूमान् ढोकाको टुँढ्धाराको प्रतापमल्लको अभिलेखबाट

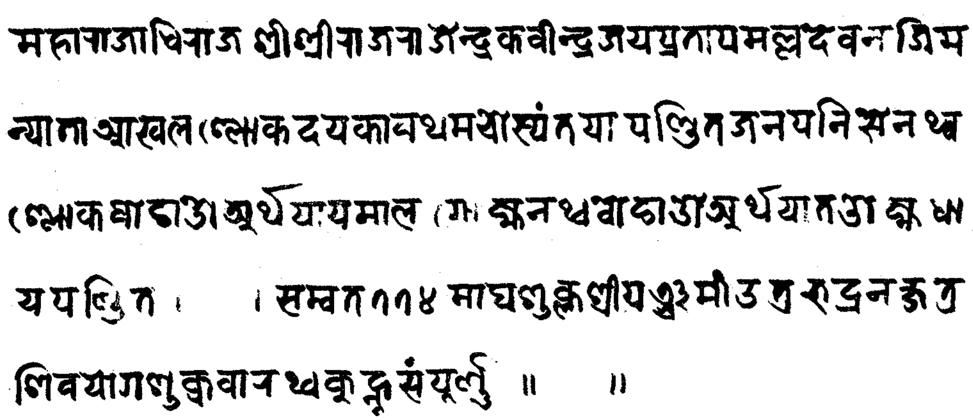


आ ओ क ख ग घ ङ चो ज त द ध न प व



क्ष श्लो ण्डि म्न श्च ह्नु ण्ण

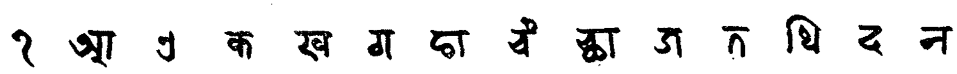
कान्तिपुर हनूमान्ढोकाको प्रतापमल्लको अभिलेखबाट –



लिपिचित्र ३७

कमलद्वीगणेशस्थानका ज्योतिप्रकाशको पालाको अभिलेखबाट

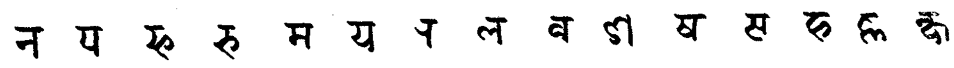
विक्रमको उन्नाईसौं शताब्दी



ॐ आ ए क ख ग ङ चं छ ज त थि द न

PLATE 43

नेवारी लिपि



न प फ भ म य र ल व श ष स ह ज्ञ क्ष

शतसाहस्रिका प्रज्ञापारमिताबाट –

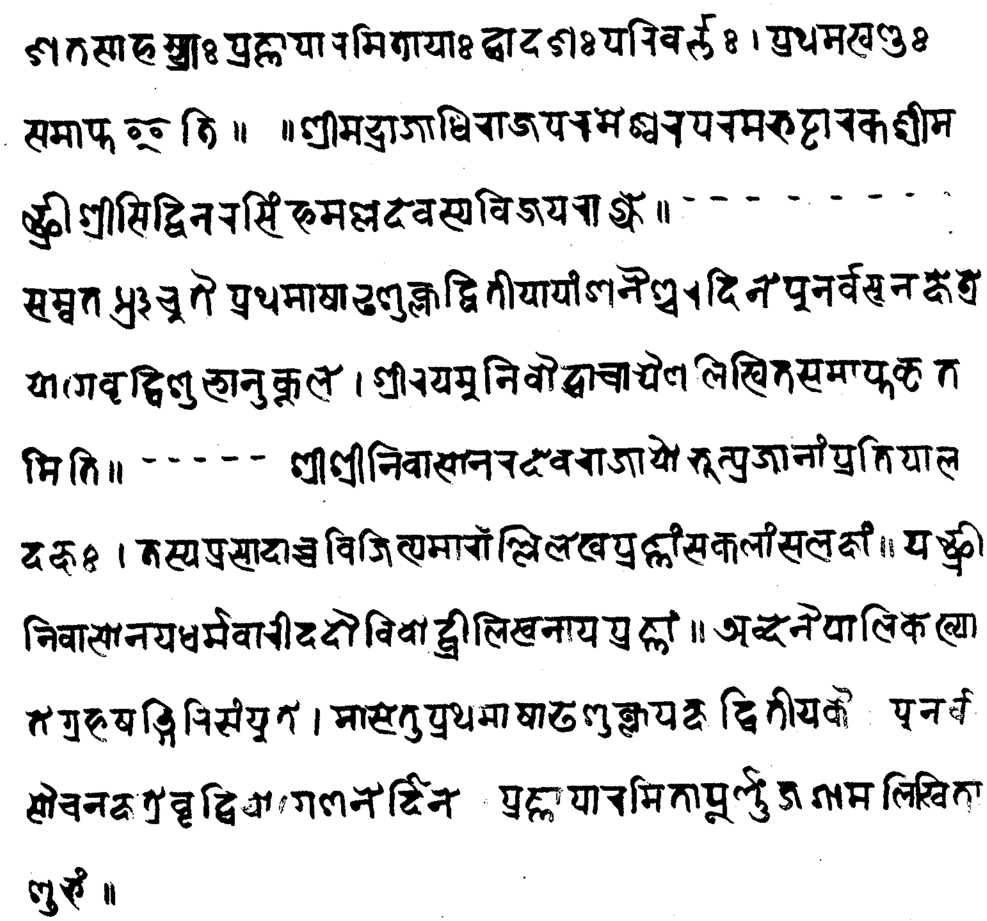


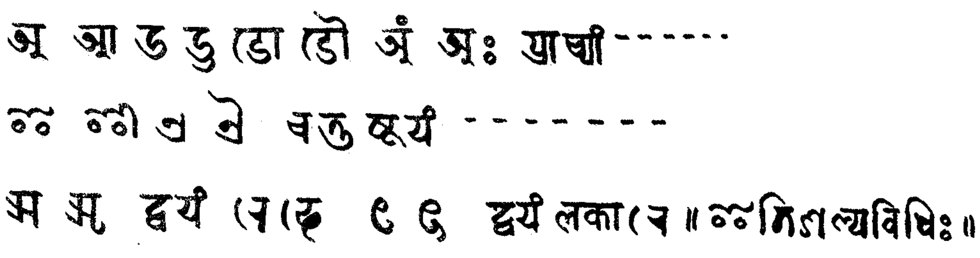
PLATE 46

[लिपिचित्र ४६]

नेवारी लिपि

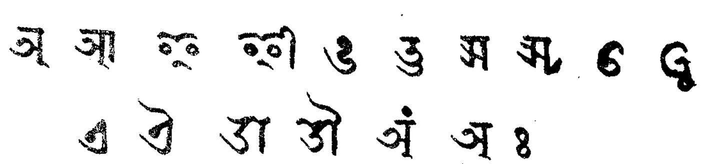
ताडपत्रमा लेखिएको खण्डरवाद्य पुस्तकबाट

स्वरवर्णमाला



श्रीमतोत्तर तन्त्र पुस्तकबाट —

स्वरवर्णमाला



व्यञ्जनवर्णमाला

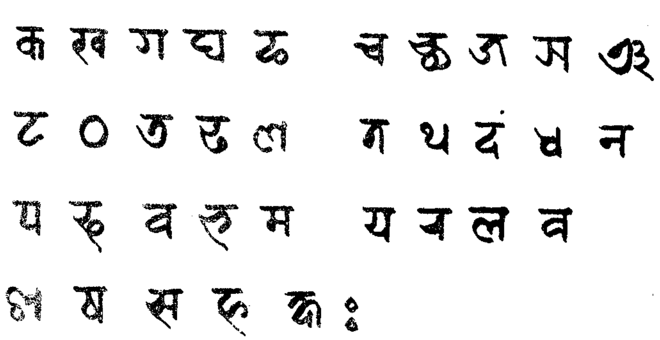


PLATE 45

नेवारी लिपि



प म य रा ल व श ष स ह क्ष

कमलाद्दीको ज्योतिप्रकाशको पालाको अभिलेखबाट

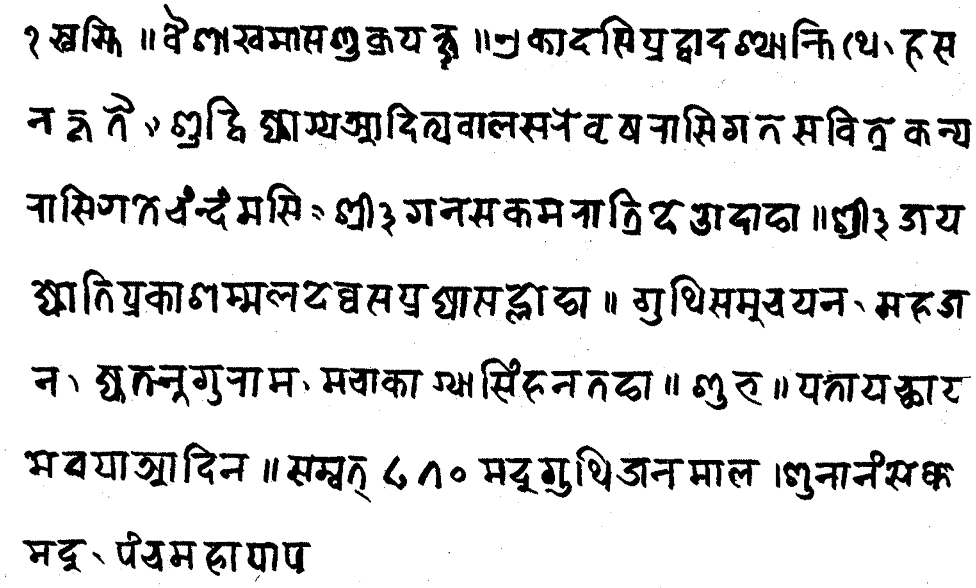


PLATE 48

नेवारी लिपिको
विकास

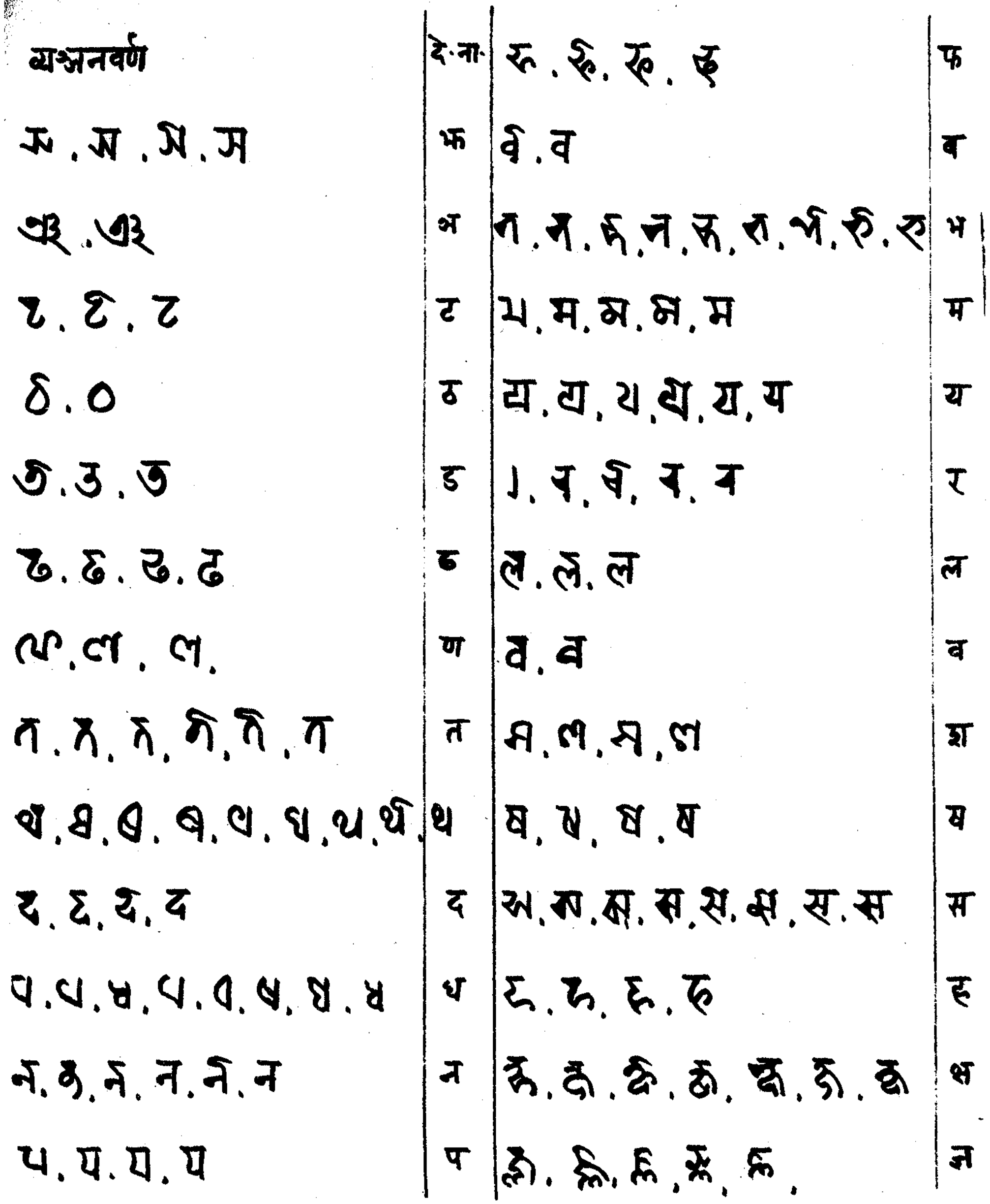


PLATE 47

[लिपिचित्र ४८]
नेवारी लिपिको
विकास

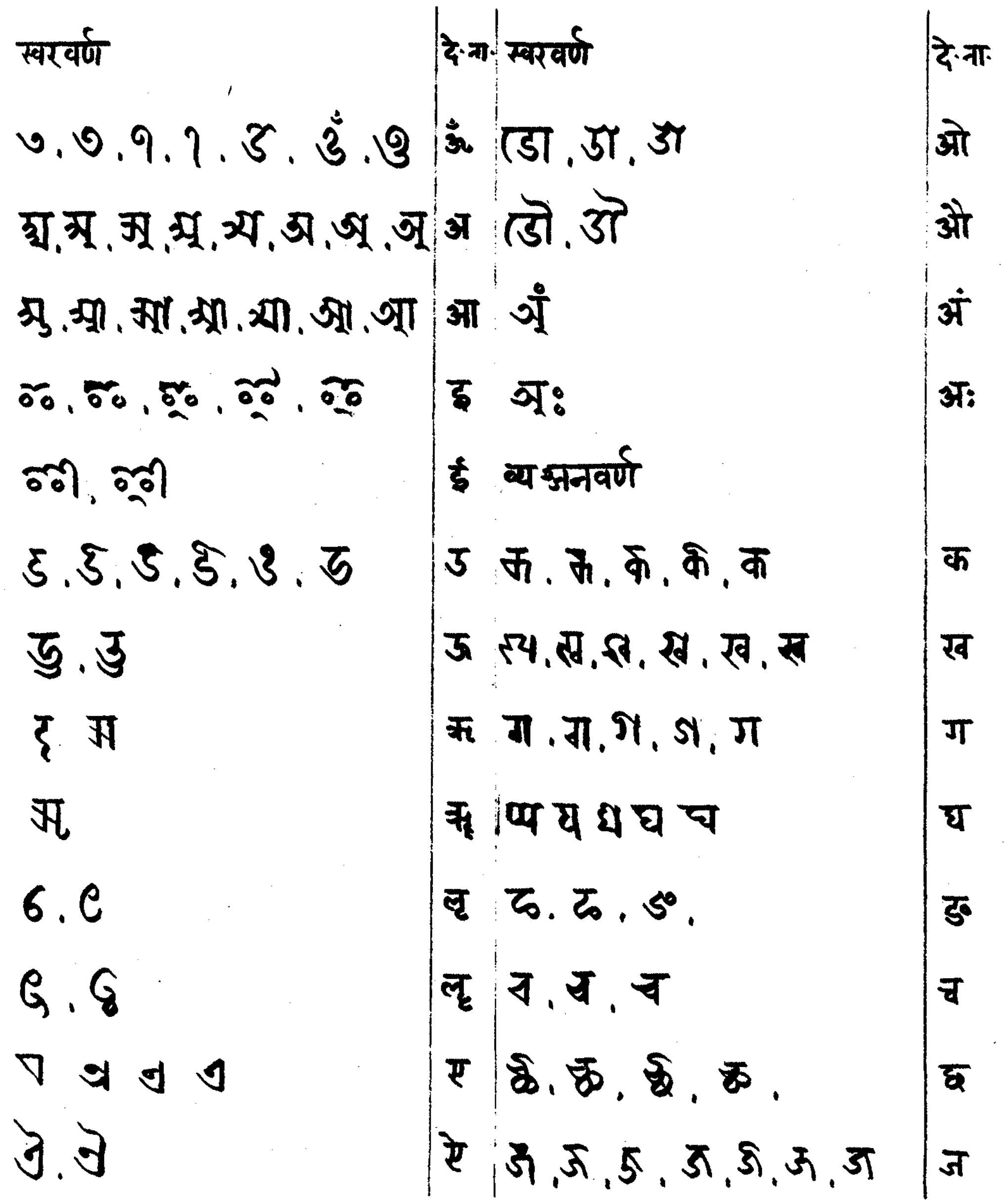
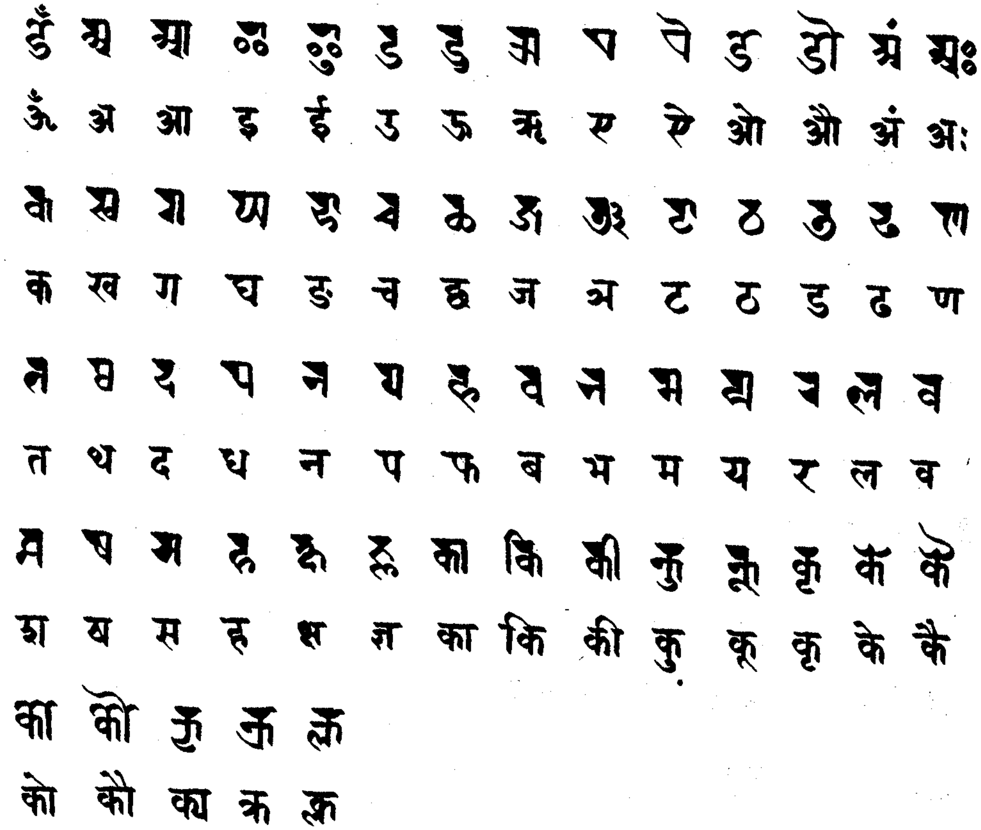


PLATE 49

[लिपिचित्र ४८]
प्राचीन रञ्जना लिपि
पाको कागतमा लेखेको उष्णीषविजयधारणीबाट
विक्रमको बाह्रौं शताब्दी



उष्णीषविजयधारणीको पत्रबाट –

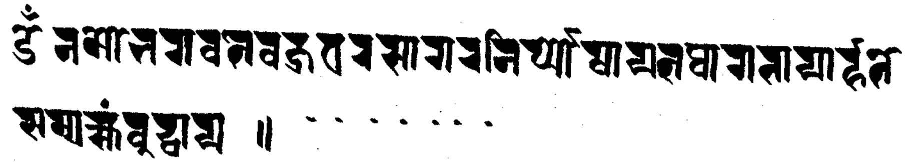
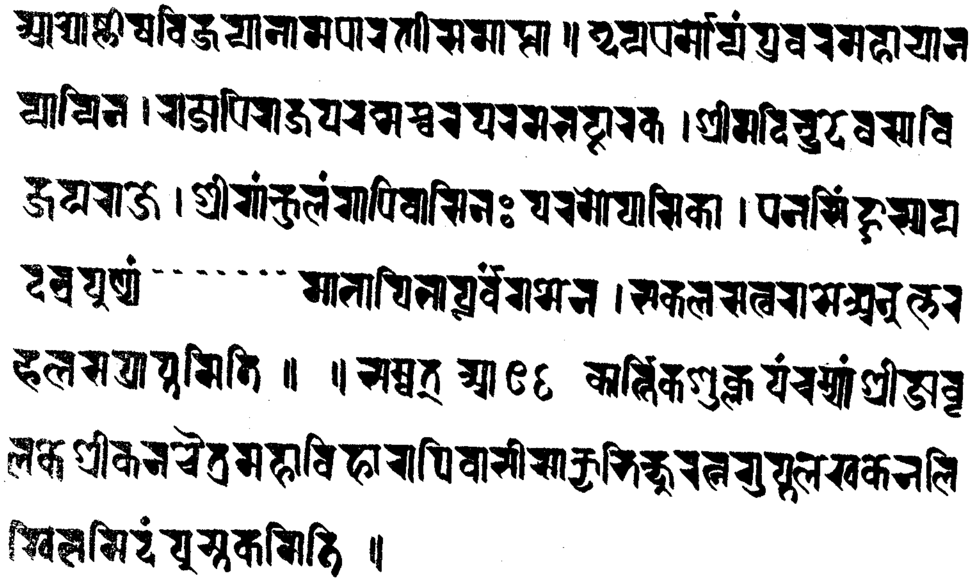


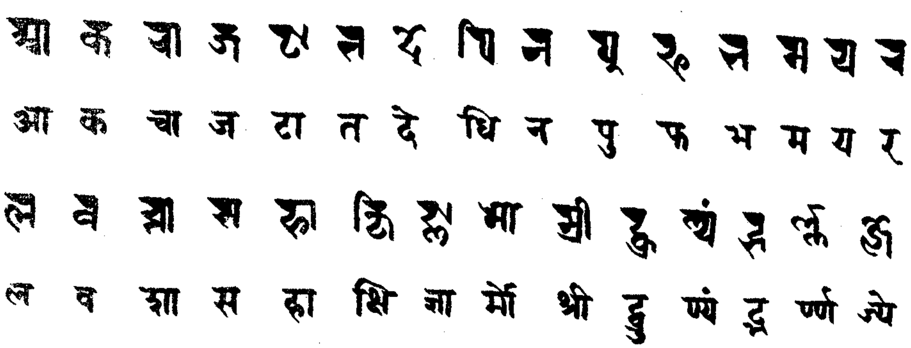
PLATE 50

प्राचीन रञ्जना लिपि



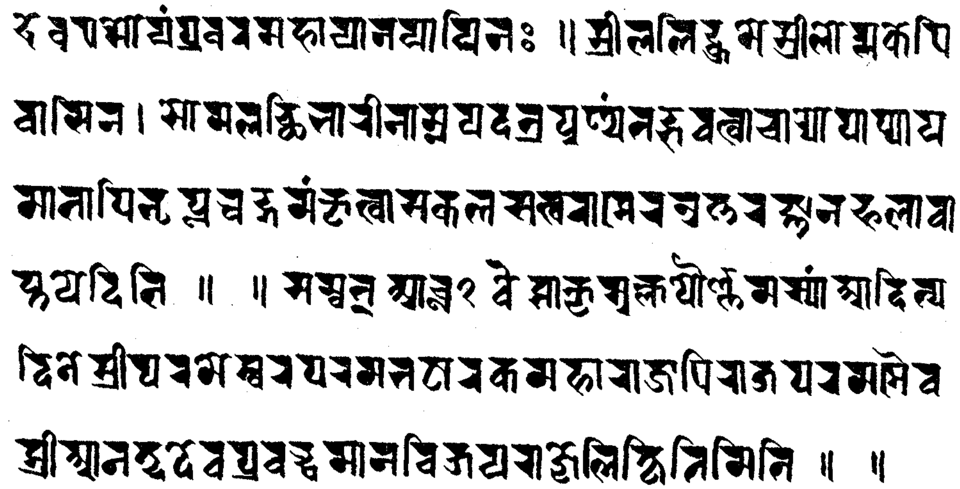
[लिपिचित्र ४९]

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको प्रज्ञापारमिताबाट
विक्रमको तेह्रौं शताब्दी



प्राचीन रञ्जना लिपि

प्रज्ञापारमिताको पत्रबाट उद्धृत



[लिपिचित्र ४२]

इचंगुनारायणभगाडिको विजयकामदेवको पालाको अभिलेखबाट



आ इ क का कि कृ ख खि ग गा गृ घ च ज

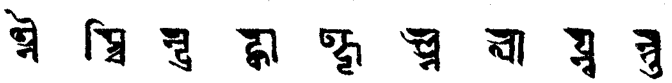


ढौ ण ता थ द धा न पि बु भि मु य र ल

प्राचीन रञ्जना लिपि



व श ष स ह्री क्ष न्ध म्र द्या स्म र्म स्य ह्य श्री



नै श्चि न्द्र ङ्का ज्ये र्ण र्था म्रु न्तु

इचङ्गुको विजयकामदेवको पालाको अभिलेखको –

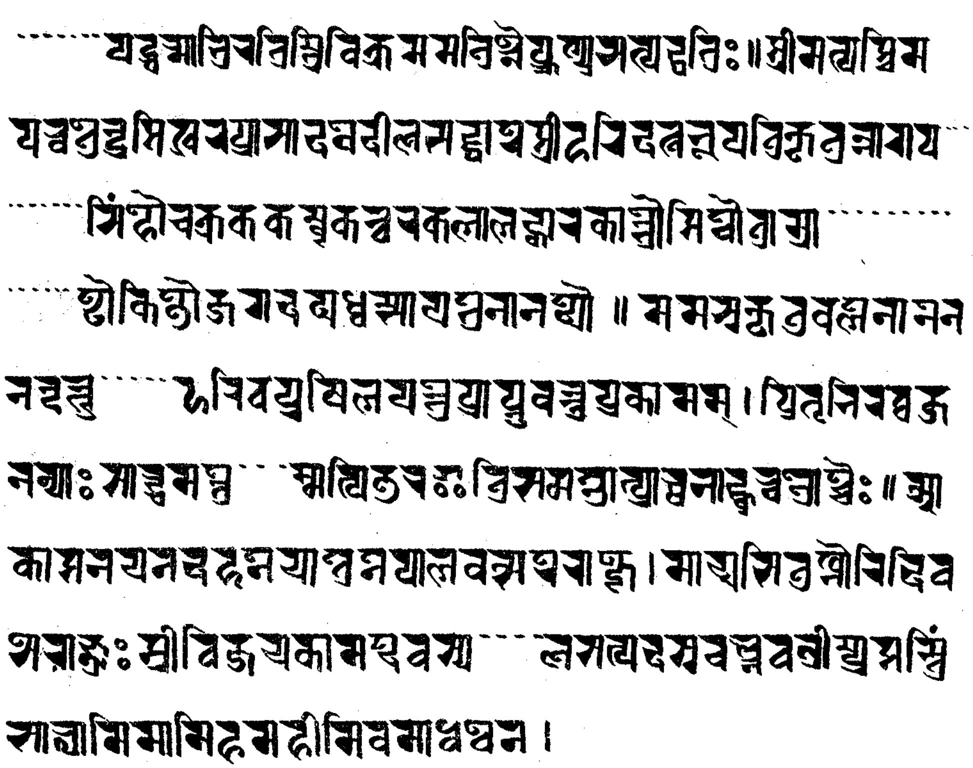
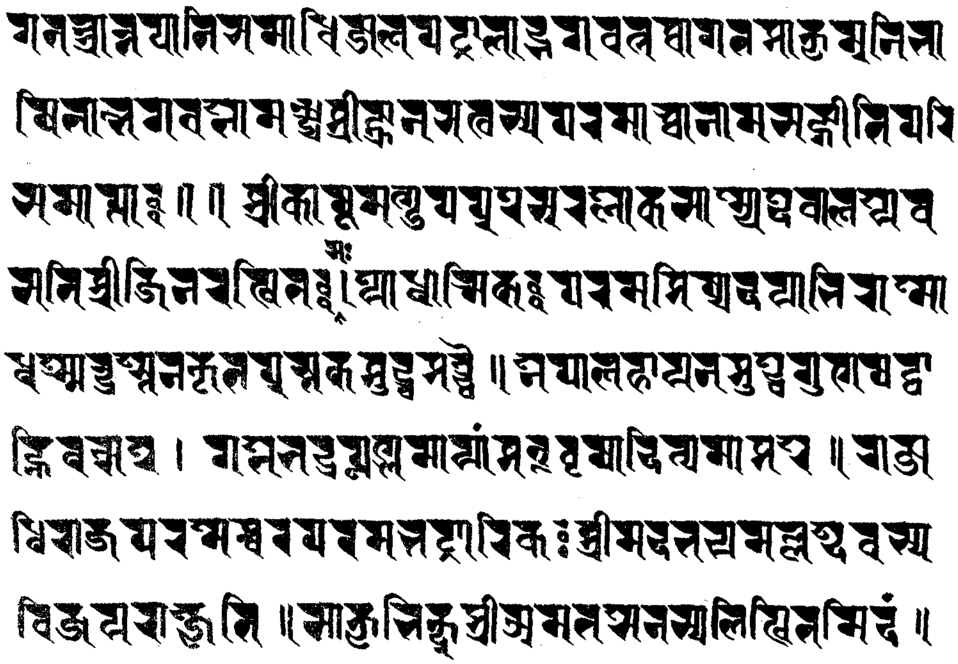


PLATE 54

प्राचीन रञ्जना लिपि



[लिपिचित्र ४५]

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको दुर्गासप्तशती भन्ने चण्डीमहात्म्यबाट
विक्रमको पन्ध्रौं शताब्दी

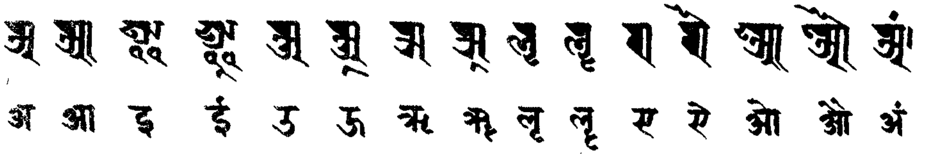


PLATE 53

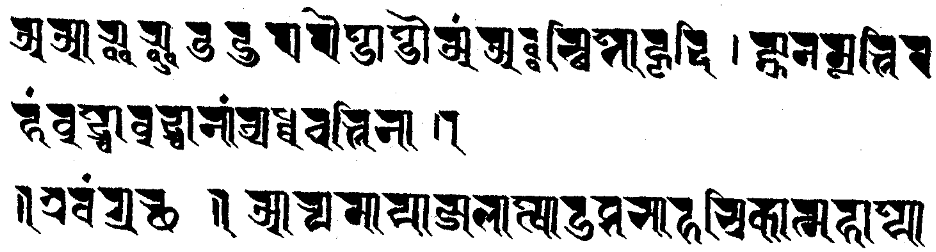
[लिपिचित्र ४४]

प्राचीन रञ्जना लिपि

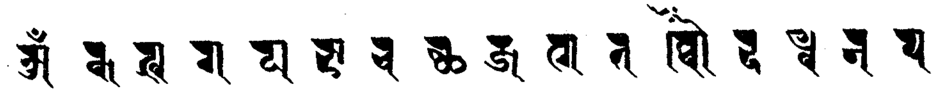
पाको कागतमा लेखेको नामसंगीत पुस्तकबाट



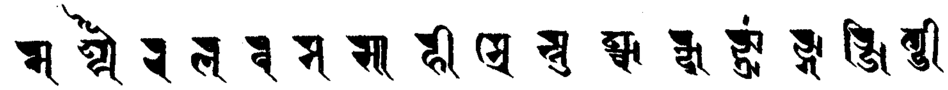
नामसंगीतको पत्रबाट --



प्राचीन रञ्जना लिपि

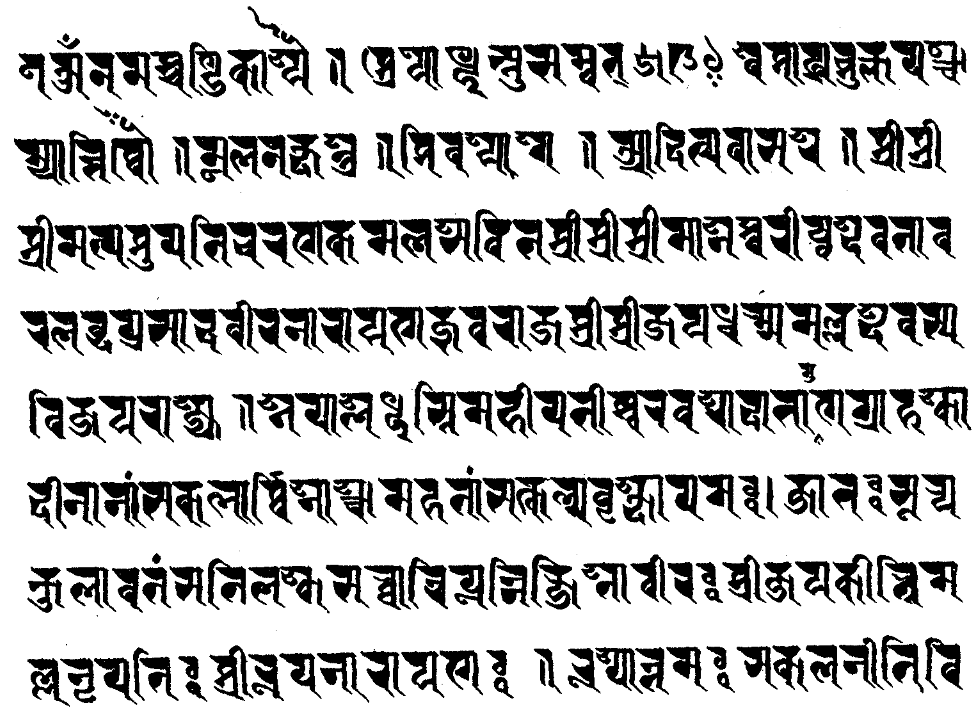


ॐ क ख ग घ ङ च छ ज ण त थो द ध न प

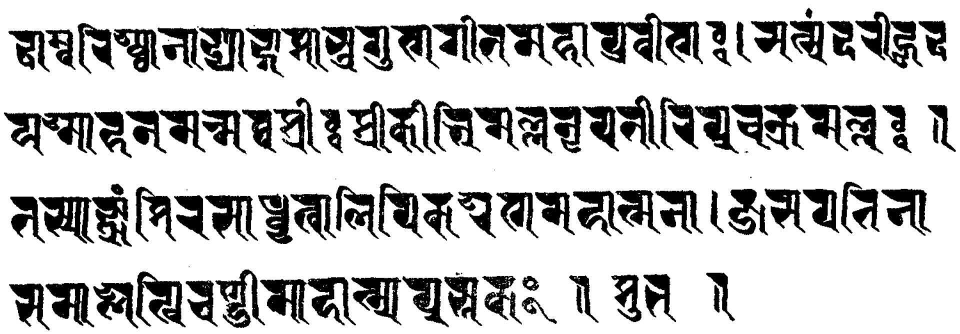


म यै र ल व श सा ही श्रे सु श्व क्ष ज्ञां ङ्ग र्जि ण्डी

चण्डी महात्म्य पुस्तकको –

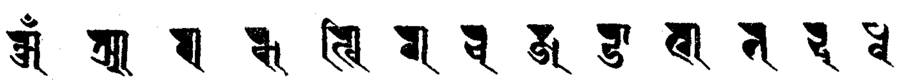


प्राचीन रञ्जना लिपि



[लिपिचित्र ४६]

पाको कालमा लेखेको अष्टसाहस्रिका प्रज्ञापारमिताको
विक्रमको अठारौं शताब्दी



ॐ आ श क खि ग च ज ड ण त द ध



न पा म भ य र रू ला व से सा शु हा



त्यै र्य प्र ज्ञा सु

PLATE 57

रञ्जना लिपि
अष्टसाहस्रिका प्रज्ञापारमिताबाट

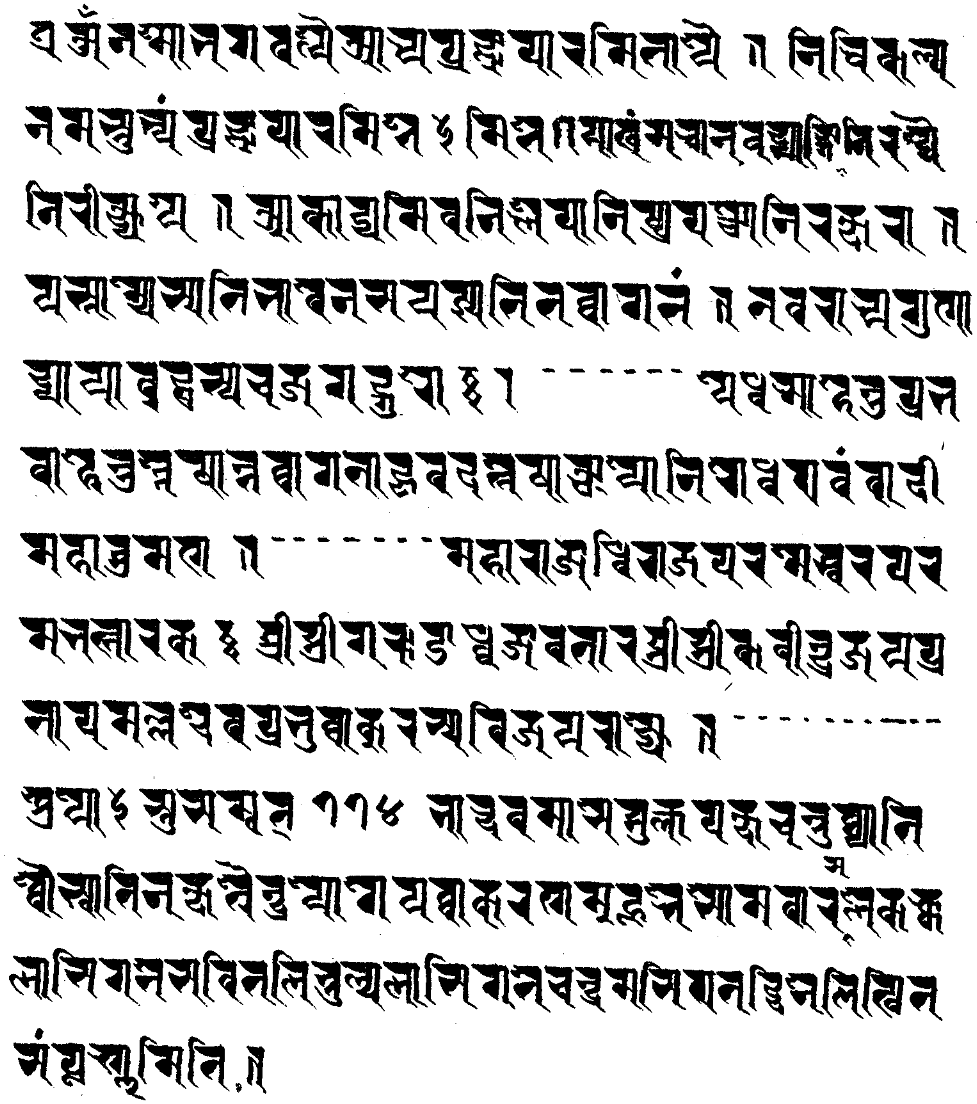
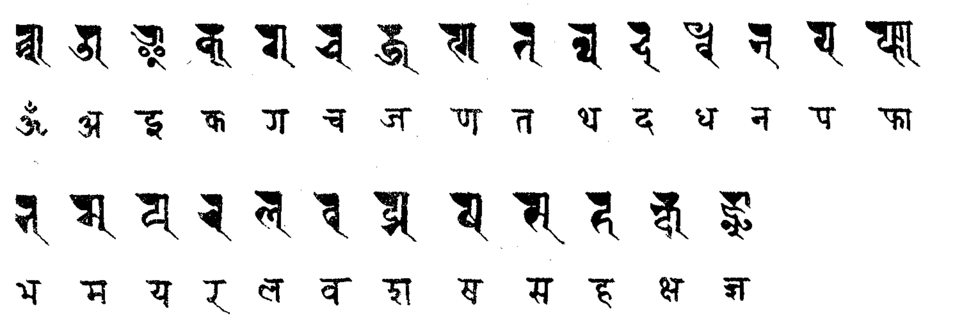


PLATE 58

[लिपिचित्र ४७]
रञ्जना लिपि
काठमाडौं लगनबहालको पार्थिवेन्दुका पालाको अभिलेखबाट



लगनबहालको अभिलेखको —

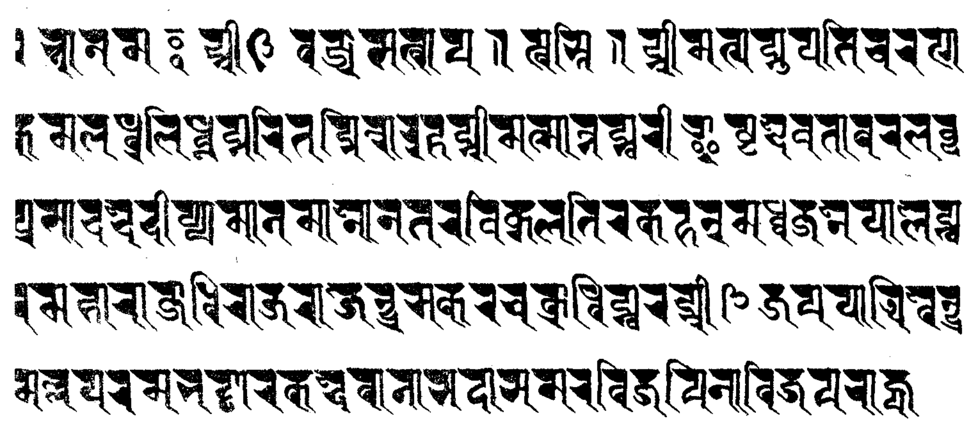
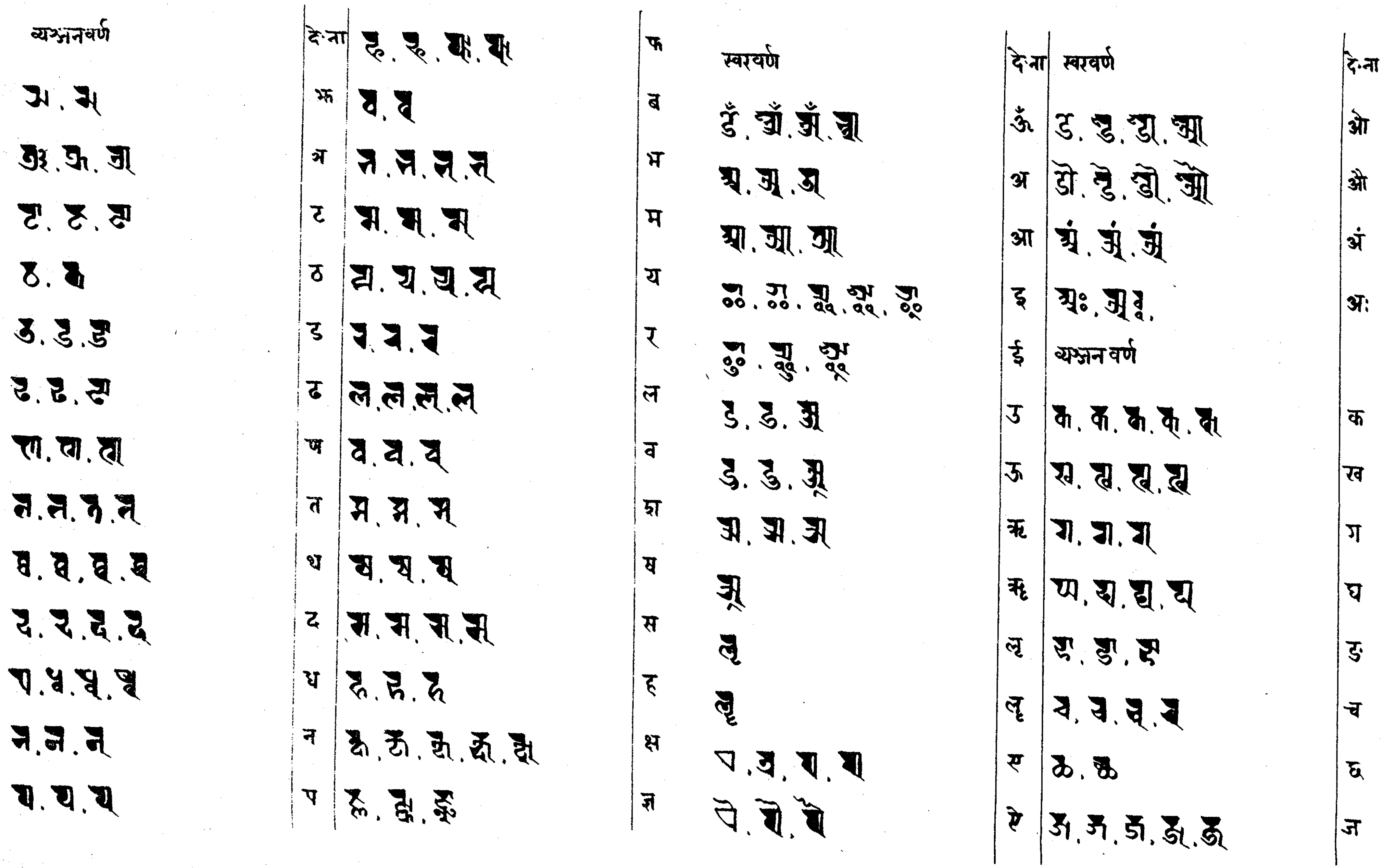


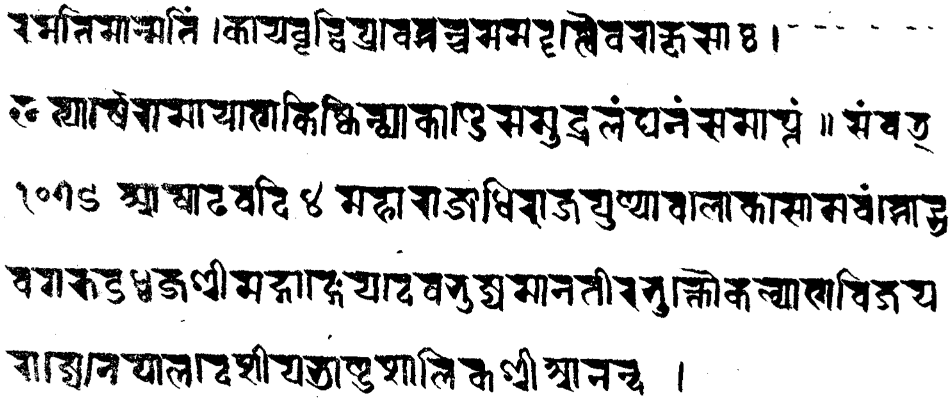
PLATE 60

रञ्जना लिपिको
विकास

PLATE 59

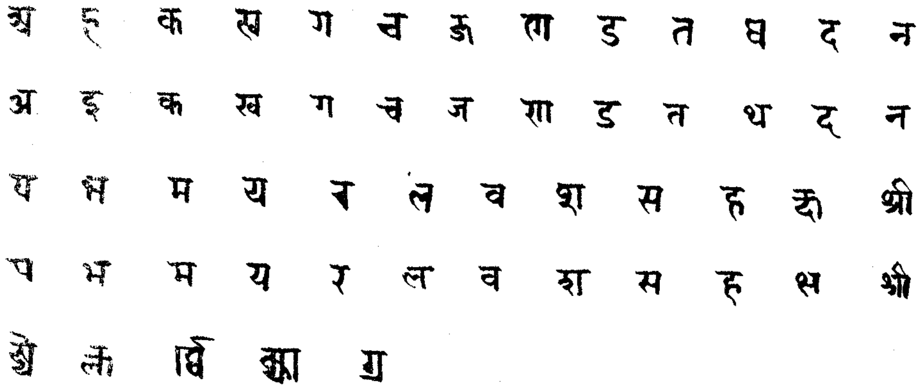
[लिपिचित्र ४७]
रञ्जना लिपिको
विकास





[लिपिचित्र ५०]

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको हरिवंश भन्ने पुस्तकबाट उद्धृत
विक्रमको चौधौं शताब्दी



अ इ क ख ग च ज ण ड त थ द न

प भ म य र ल व श स ह क्ष श्री

ज्ये क्रु थें क्या ग्र

[लिपिचित्र ४९]

प्राचीन देवनागरी लिपि

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको वाल्मीकि रामायणबाट



आ इ क ख ग घ ङ च ज ट ठ ड ढ

ण त द ध न प भ म य र ल व श

श ष स ह प्र ष्ठ श्च न्ते श्व न्था क्ष्य ज्ये

ण्या श्री ह्नि क्षौ थ रु

वाल्मीकिरामायणको –

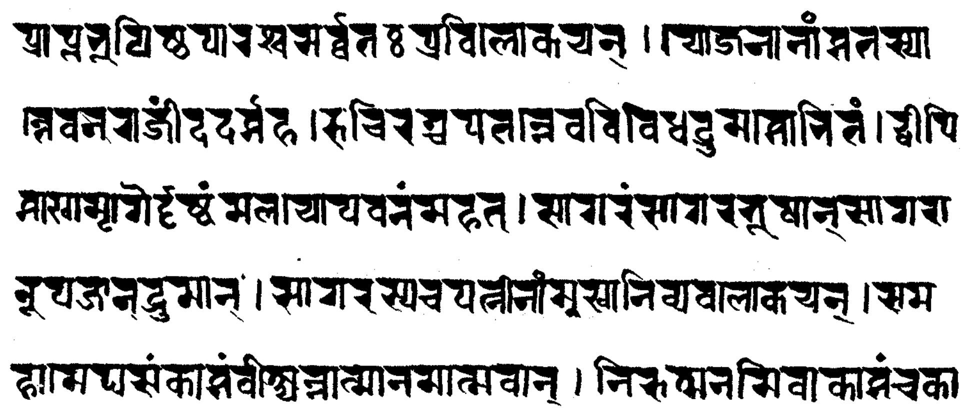


PLATE 64

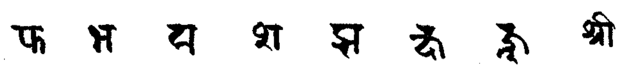
[लिपिचित्र ५१]

प्राचीन देवनागरी लिपि

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको लक्ष्मीसहस्रनाम भन्ने पुस्तकबाट



ॐ अ आ इ ए क ख ग च ण त थ ध



फ भ य श स क्ष ज्ञ श्री

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको मतङ्गमातेश्वर तन्त्रबाट –

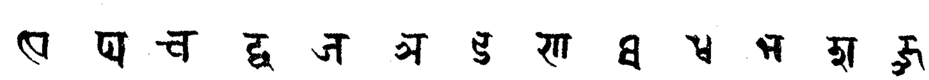


ॐ अ इ उ ऊ ऋ ए घ घ ढ थ ब ज्ञ

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको कुलमूलरत्नपञ्चकावतारबाट –



ॐ ॐ अ अ इ इ ई ई उ ऊ ऋ ए ए

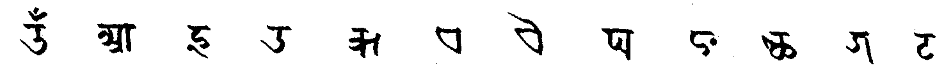


ऐ घ च ढ ज ञ ड ण थ ध भ श ज्ञ

PLATE 63

प्राचीन देवनागरी लिपि

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको कृत्यकल्पतरु भन्ने पुस्तकबाट



ॐ आ इ उ ऋ ए ऐ घ ङ ढ ज ट



ठ ड ढ ध प फ ब ज्ञ

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको स्वरपुच्छागभोग भन्ने पुस्तकबाट —



ॐ अ इ ई ढ ण ध भ य श

हरिवंश भन्ने पुस्तकको –

॥ श्रीमद्वाराणस्यां गोविन्दचन्द्र विजयराज्ये सम्वत् १२०१ अग्रहणमा

सशुक्लपक्षे तिथौ पौर्णमास्यां नंडशाली श्रीराउलचं दुदवस्यार्थे लेखापि

तं नायक श्रीवत्सोमाख्येः लेखापितं पाणि जात हरिवंश पुस्तकं लिखितं च

पंडित श्रीमल्लदेवेनेति ॥ ·· इति महाभारते शतसहस्र्यां संहितायां वि

याशि ञ्यं पाणि जाता हरिवंशः समाप्तः ॥

PLATE 66

[लिपिचित्र ५४]

प्राचीन देवनागरी लिपि

जुमलाका राजा पृथ्वीमल्लको तामापत्रबाट उद्धृत

विक्रमको पन्ध्रौं शताब्दी

उं	अ	॰ं	क	ख	ग	च	छ	ज	झ	ट	ठ	ड
ॐ	अ	इ	क	ख	ग	च	छ	ज	झ	ट	ठ	ड
णा	त	थ	द	ध	न	प	भ	म	य	र	ल	
ण	त	थ	द	ध	न	प	भ	म	य	र	ल	
व	श	स	ह	क्ष	क्ष	ज्ञ	श्री					
व	श	स	ह	क्ष	क्ष	ज्ञ	श्री					

पृथ्वीमल्लको तामापत्र –

उं स्वस्ति ॥ स्वस्ति के नंद्यावर्ते श्रीशाजवनुः शालंमुधाधवलसौधोत्संगतामनासं

मीनमनो हनो हनकुकाना थं युरुणाि कृपितप्रतीककुसुमाथुगजीवानुनमाणीय··

·· कटाक्ष विद्धेपवानिवाहृप्रमुदितननुगाजनमनः शिखावलापातः अपानसौनव्य

लुत्यनधुकनमुखनसहकानाशोकपुन्नागसुनलितपनिसने श्रीमतिसंजानगा

ते ॥ गनुउध्वञावनाना पानसंसानसागनोन्नानसेनुजूतापधनश्रीघनानाथ

नाधिमनप्राज्यनाज्यनक्का क्रमप्रचंडनिऊनुऊदंडकुंडलिनकठिनकोदंड

निर्मुक्त निशितशननिकननिर्दिन्नानातिप्रतीकोच्छूलक्कूत ञासवयानोन्न

PLATE 65

प्राचीन देवनागरी लिपि

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको कुलालिकाम्नाय पुस्तकबाट

ॐ	अ	आ	इ	ई	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ए	ए	ऐ	ऐ
ॐ	अ	आ	इ	ई	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ए	ए	ऐ	ऐ
ओ	ओ	औ	औ	क	ख	ग	घ	ङ	च	छ	ज	
ओ	ओ	औ	औ	क	ख	ग	घ	ङ	च	छ	ज	
झ	ञ	ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण	त	थ	द	ध	न	
झ	ञ	ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण	त	थ	द	ध	न	
प	फ	ब	भ	म	य	र	ल	व	श	क्ष	ज्ञ	
प	फ	ब	भ	म	य	र	ल	व	श	क्ष	ज्ञ	

लक्ष्मीसहस्रनाम भन्ने पुस्तकको –

ह तिहि च ण्ण पा ------ स्वोमहातंत्रभगवत्पद्मनाभप्रोक्तं हि च ण्णगर्ने ह

दयसर्वं स्वं लक्ष्मी नाम प्रहृ सुंशंपूर्णमिति शुभं ॥ ॥ संवत् १२३१

आषाढ शुदि पंचमी गुरु दिनालिखितं कृस्नपंडितन ॥ ॥

PLATE 68

देवनागरीलिपिको विकास

क, क,	ग, ग, ग
ख, ख	त, त, त
ग, ग, ग	थ, थ
घ, घ, घ	द, द
ङ, ङ	ध, ध, ध
च, च,	न, न
छ, छ, छ	प, प,
ज, ज, ज, ज	फ
झ, झ	व, व
ञ	भ, भ, भ, भ
ट, ट	म, म,
ठ, ठ	य, य, य
ड, ड	र, र, र
ढ, ढ	ल, ल

PLATE 67

प्राचीन देवनागरी लिपि

नोक्कटकटपूतनो त्तालवेतालकोलाहलकाहली कृतसमनधनगीमंडलाधीश
पायनीकृतमन्तवेनेड गंडस्थलगलन्मदामोद मुदितमधुकनमधुनफांकान
सुखनिताप्रथितनान ज्ञानसमोन्त दानक महाराजाधिराजराजपनेमेश्वन
राजतारातनगिश्रीमन्पृथ्वीमल्लदेवा। । स्वान्तः पुन पालिवाना: विजयिन: ॥
श्रीशाके १२७८ श्रावणसुदि १० शुक्रेना ७० को आदेस्

[लिपिचित्र ५३]

देवनागरी लिपिको विकास

ई, ई, ई, ई, ई, ई	ऋ, ऋ, ऋ
अ, अ, अ	ए, ए, ए, ए
इ, इ, इ, इ, इ, इ	ऐ, ऐ, ऐ, ऐ
ई, ई, ई	ओ, ओ
उ, उ,	औ, औ
ऊ, ऊ,	अं,

PLATE 70

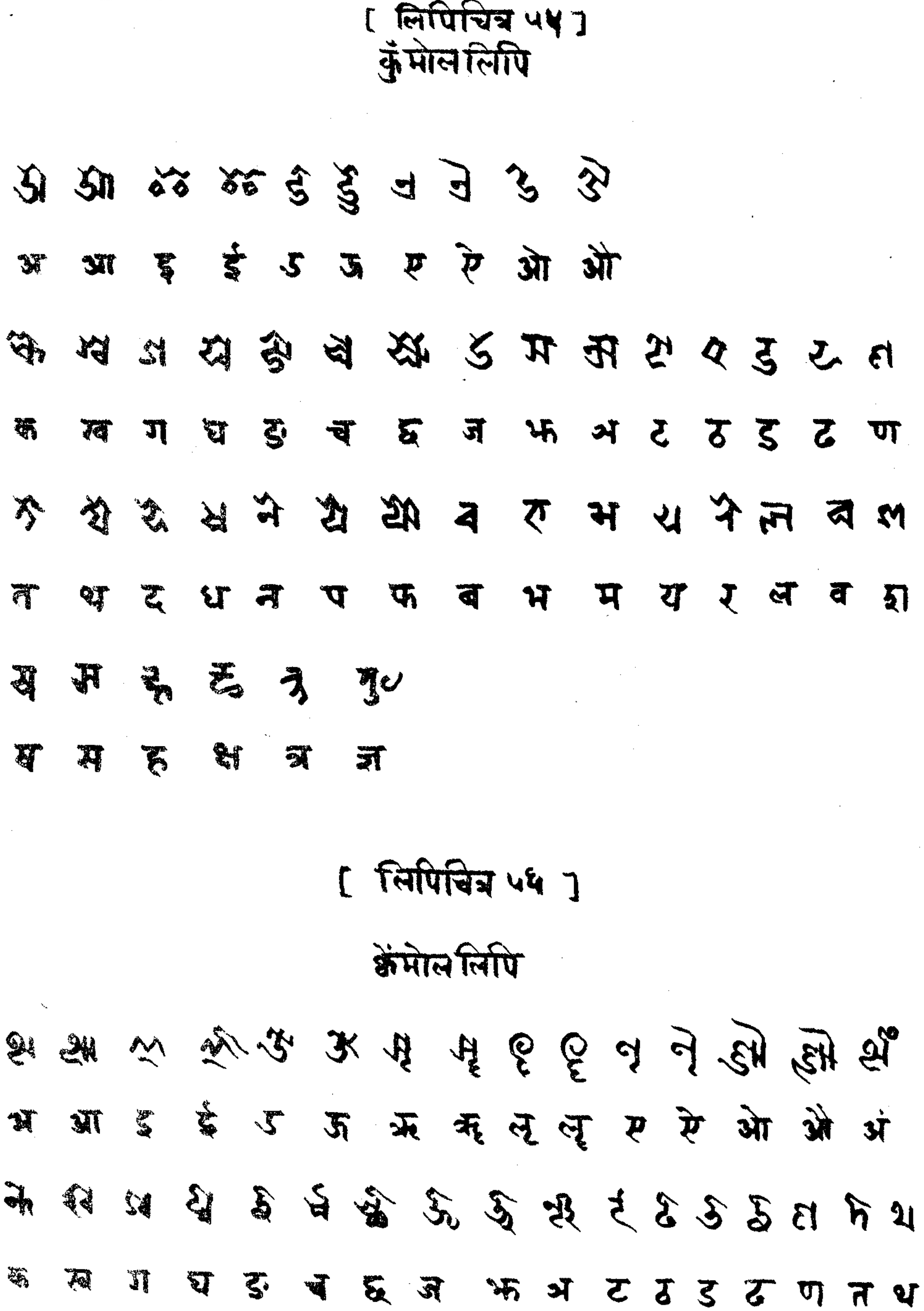


PLATE 69

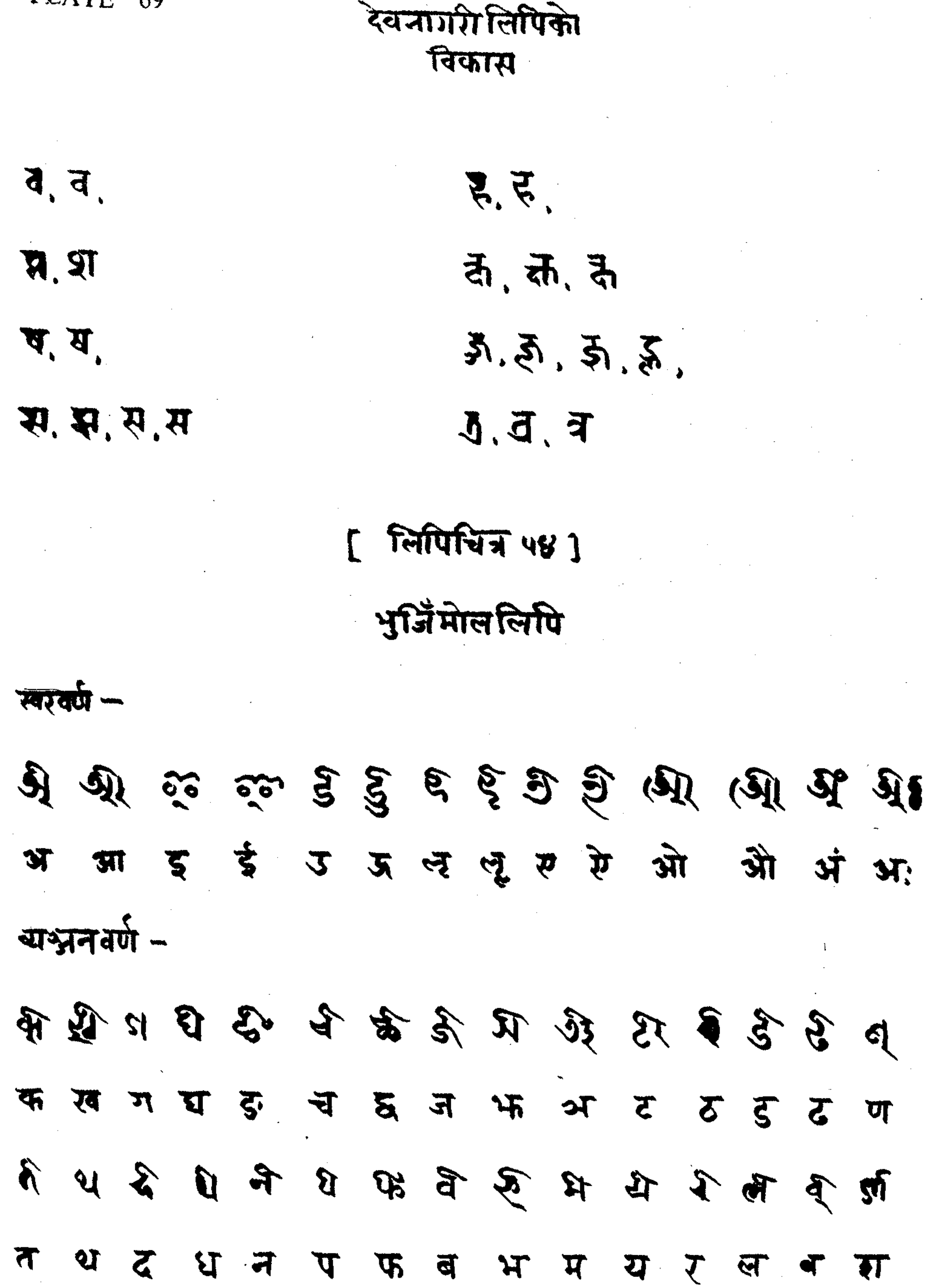
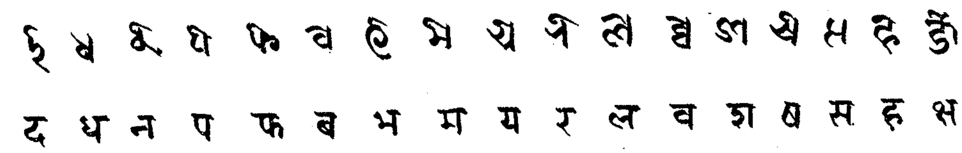


PLATE 71

क्रेमोललिपि



[लिपिचित्र ५७]

गोलमोललिपि

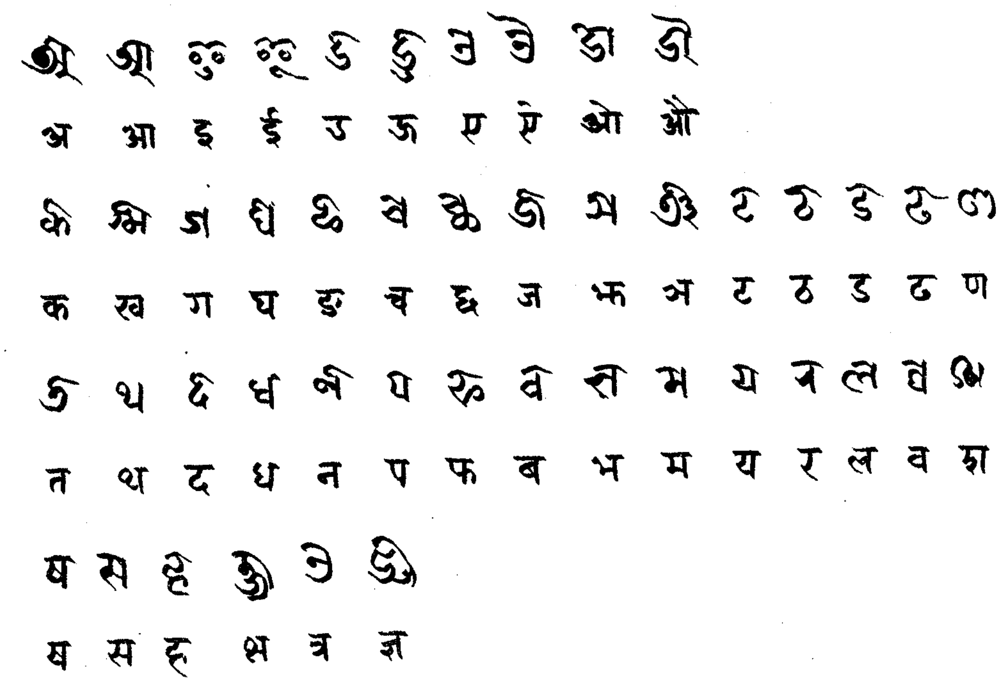
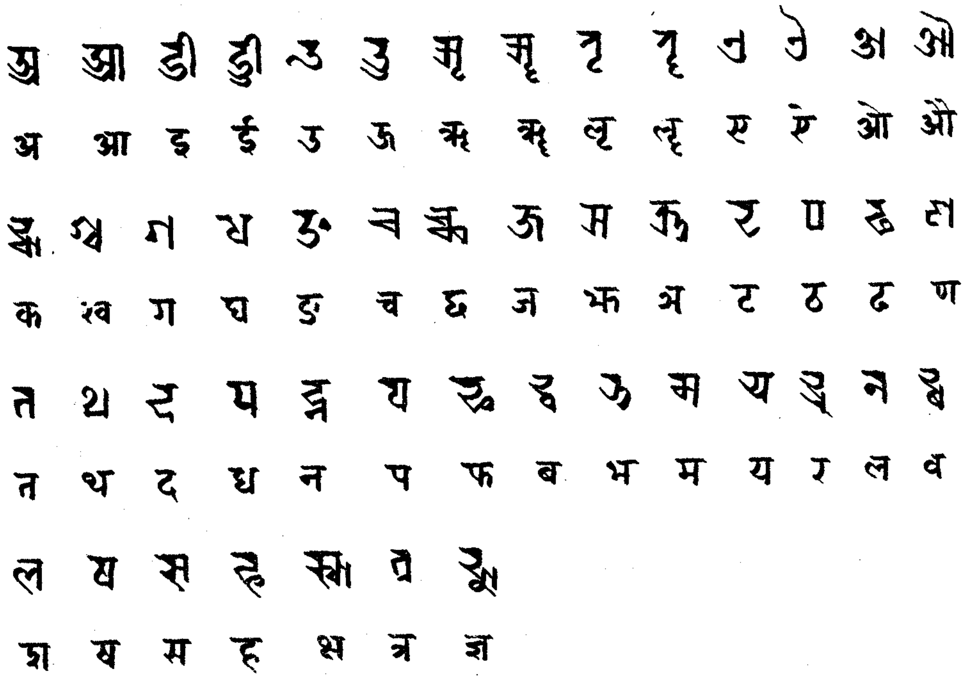


PLATE 72

[लिपिचित्र ५८]

पाचुमोल लिपि



[लिपिचित्र ५९]

हिंमोल लिपि

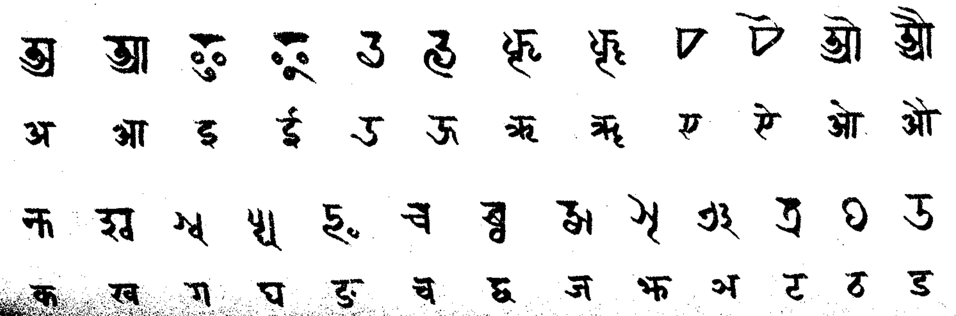


PLATE 74

[लिपिचित्र ५१]

नेवारी लिपिको उत्पत्ति

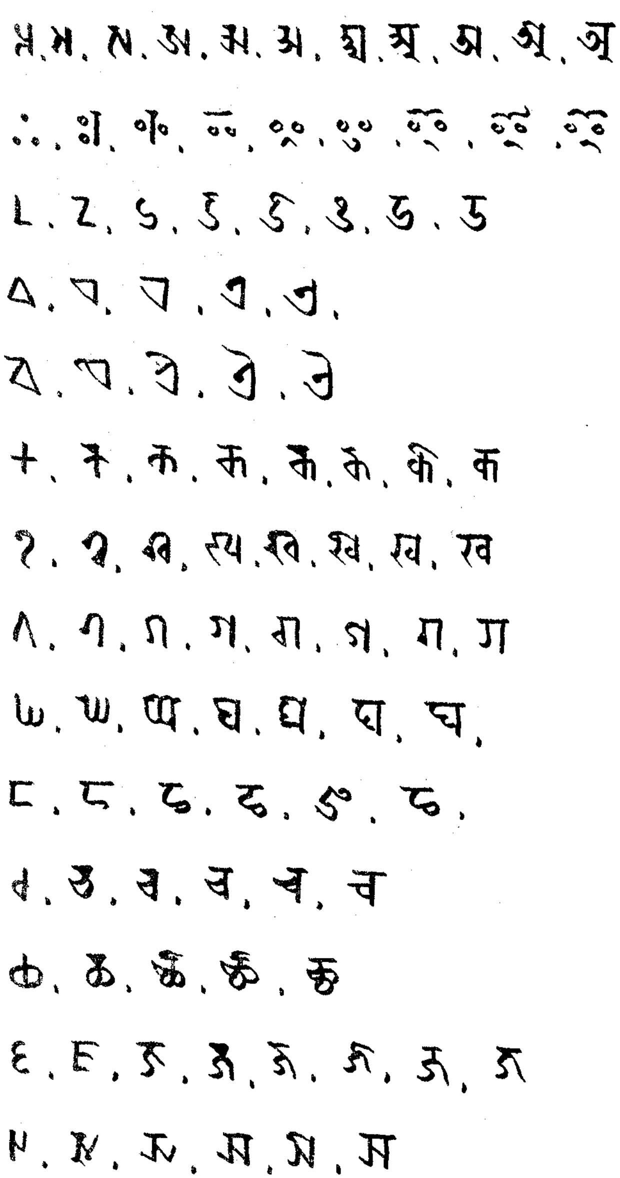
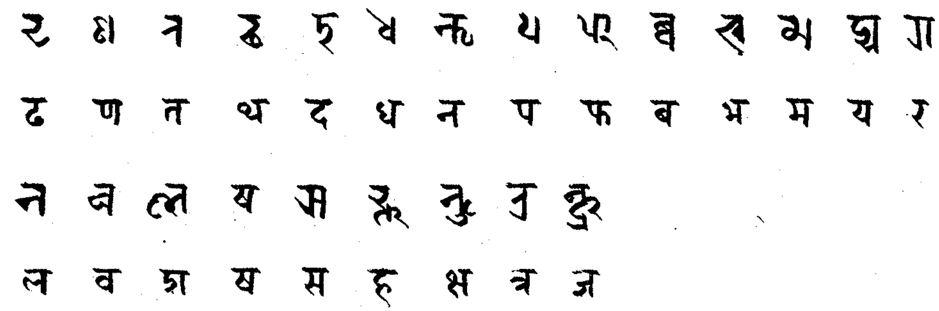


PLATE 73

हिंमोललिपि



[लिपिचित्र ५०]

लितुमोल लिपि

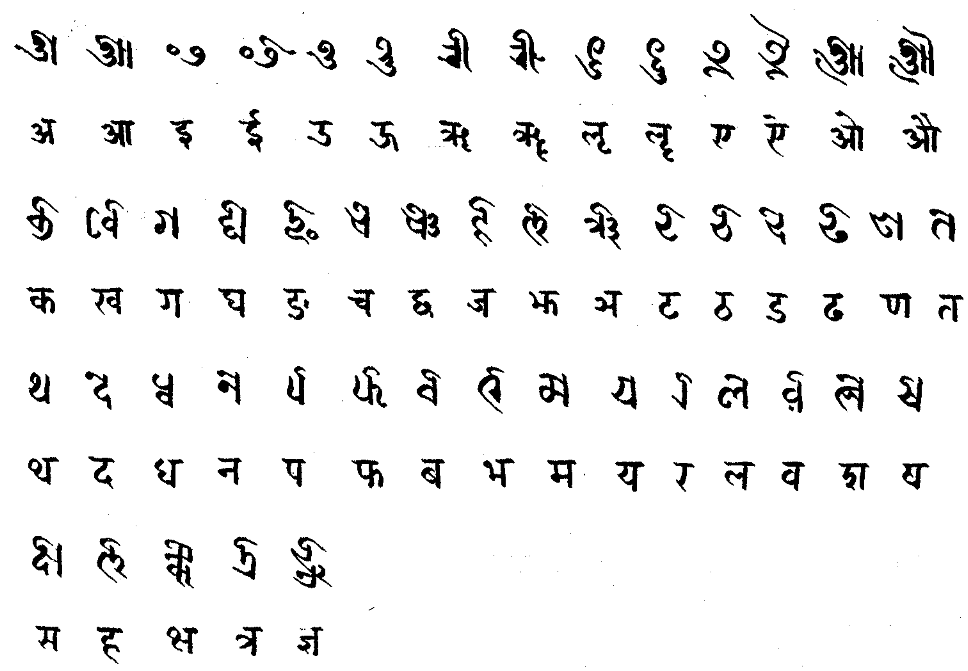


PLATE 76

नेवारी लिपिको उत्पत्ति

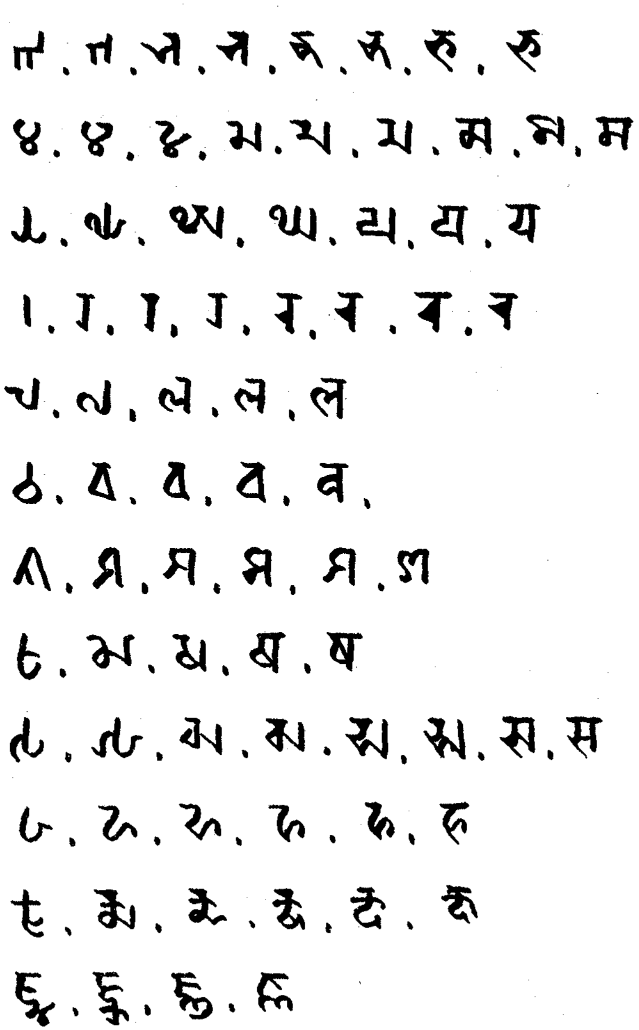


PLATE 75

नेवारी लिपिको उत्पत्ति

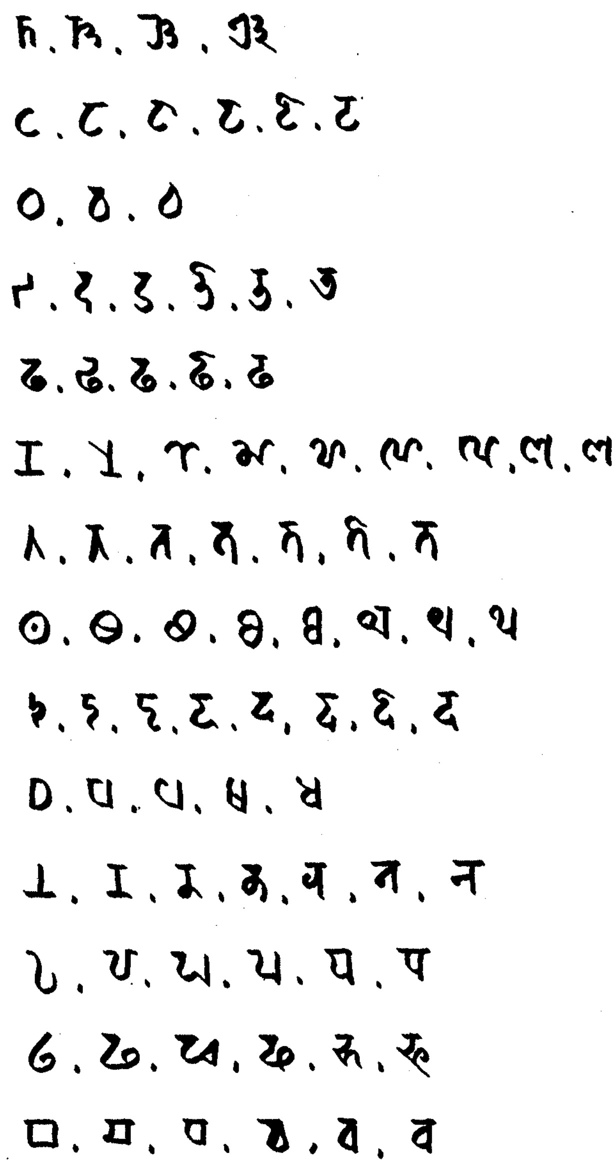


PLATE 78

देवनागरी लिपिको उत्पत्ति

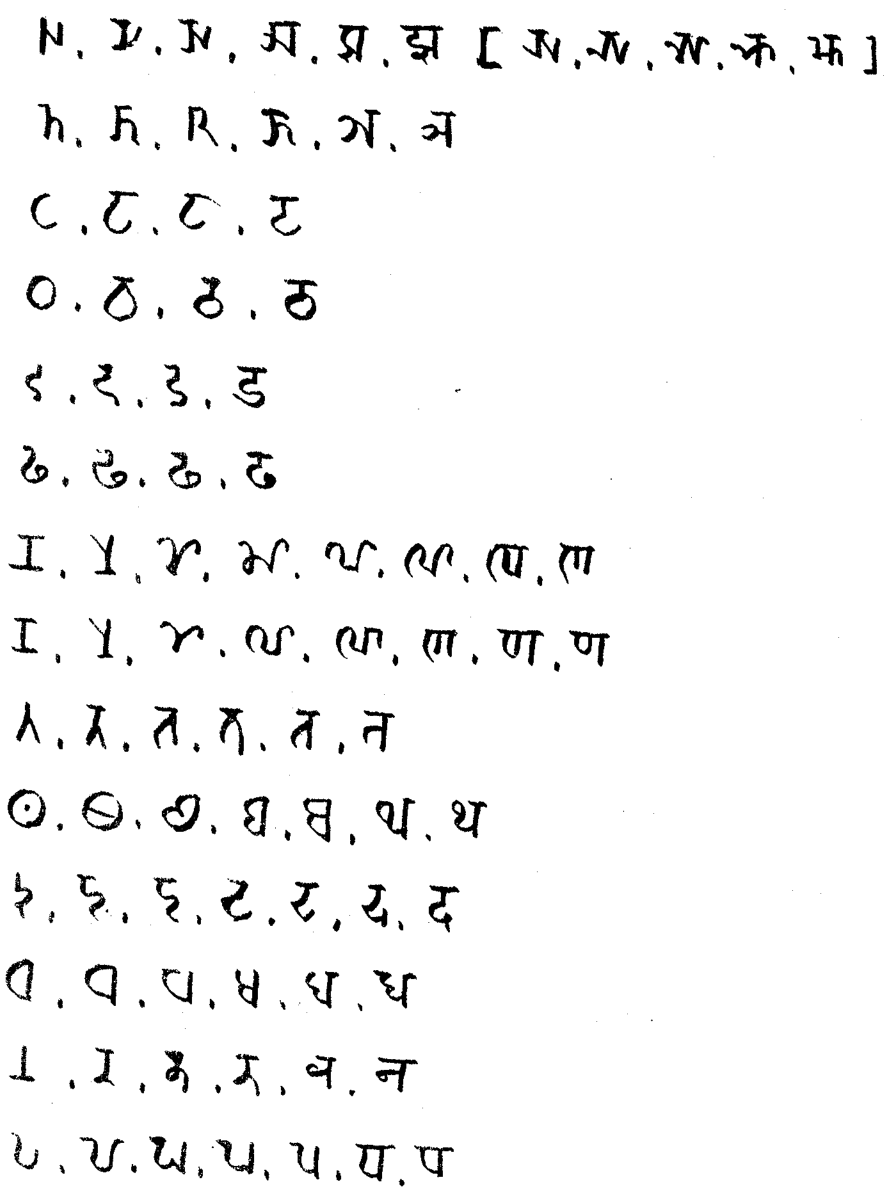


PLATE 77

[लिपिचित्र ६२]

देवनागरी लिपिको उत्पत्ति

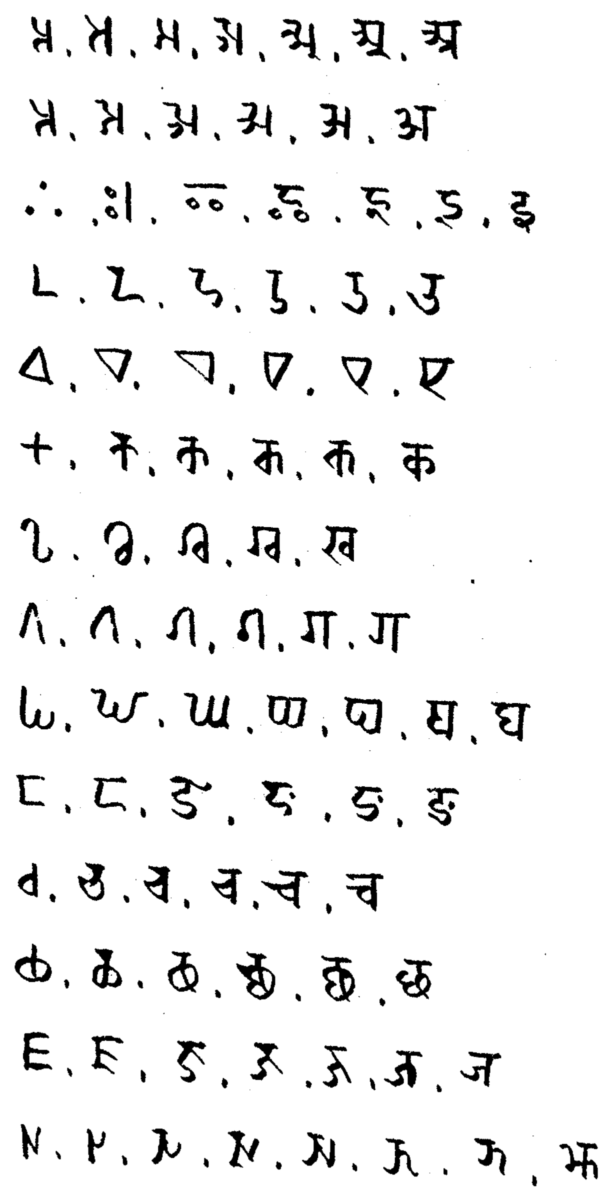
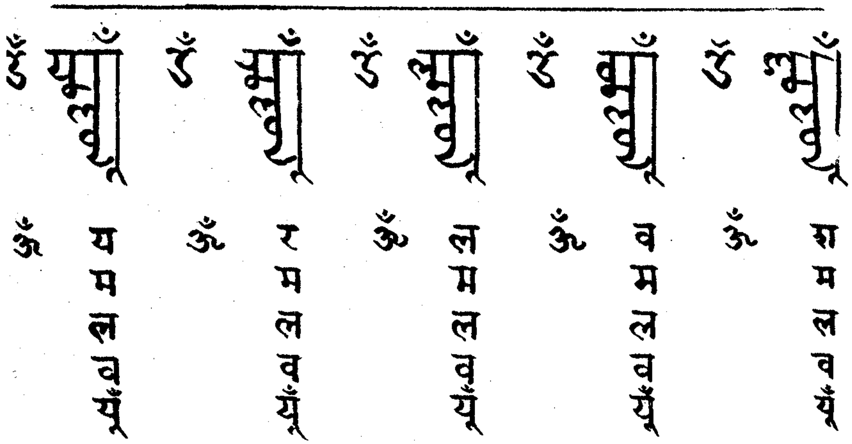


PLATE 80

[लिपिचित्र ६३]
नेवारी लिपिको कूटाक्षर
कालमाहेश्वरविधि भन्ने पुस्तकबाट



पश्चिमचरुविधान भन्ने पुस्तकबाट

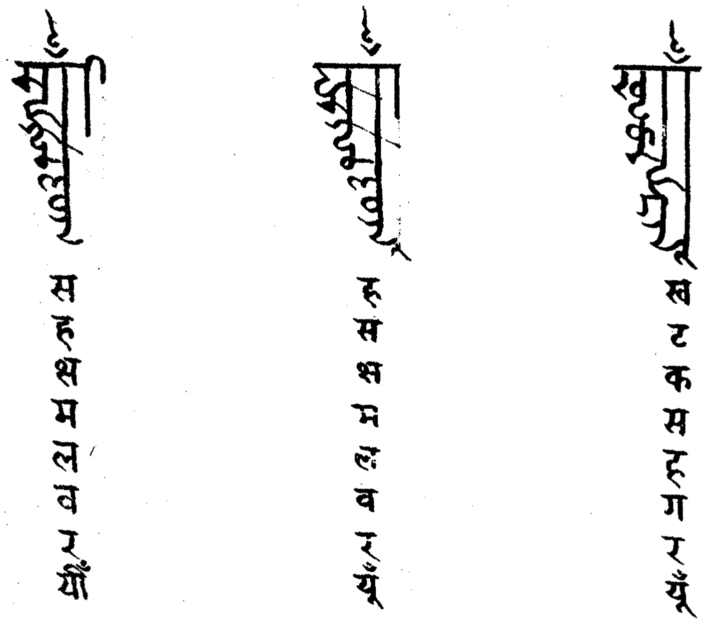


PLATE 79

देवनागरी लिपिको उत्पत्ति

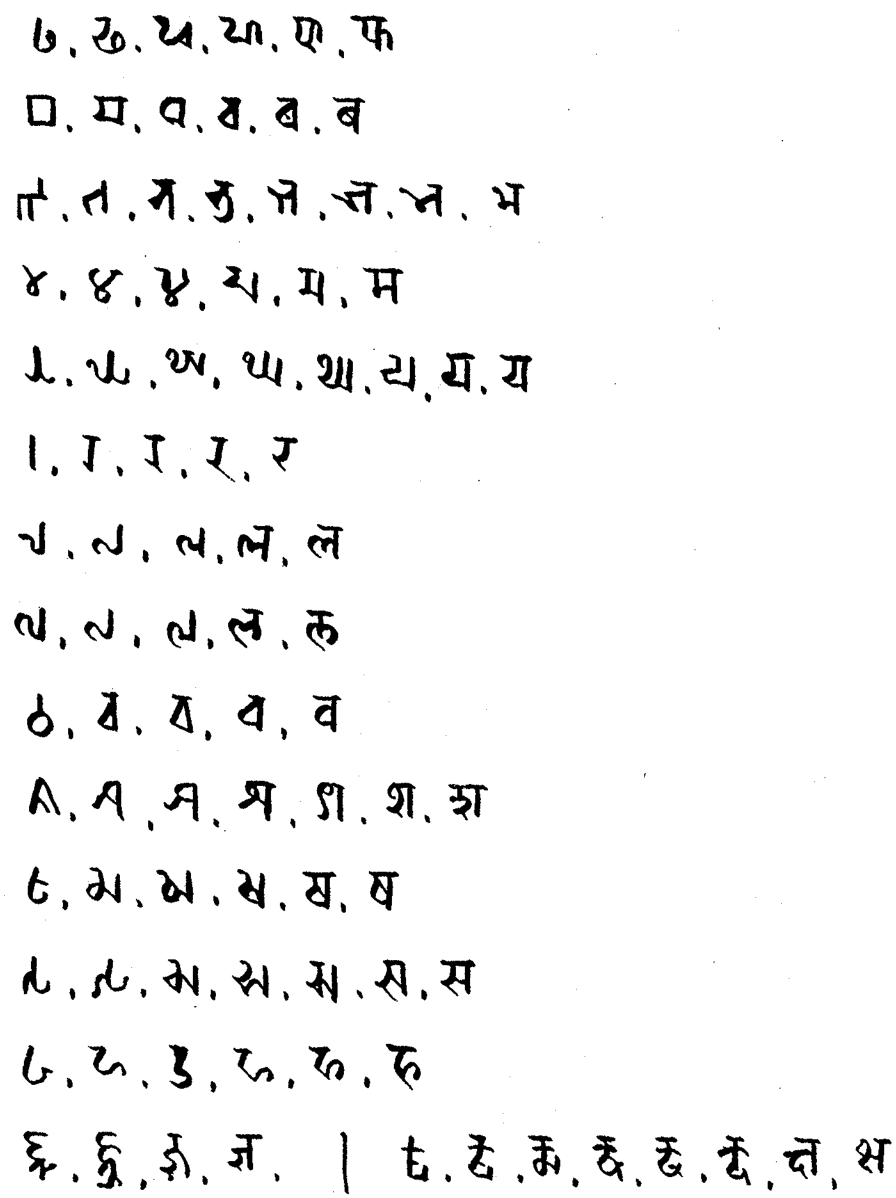
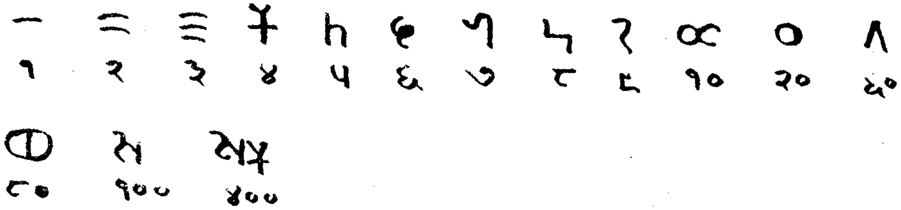


PLATE 82

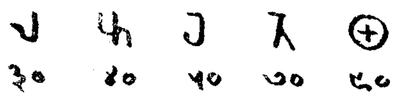
[लिपिचित्र (१)]

ब्राह्मीलिपिको अंक

नानाघाटको अभिलेख र आन्ध्रभृत्यको अभिलेखबाट



क्षत्रपको अभिलेखबाट



[लिपिचित्र २]

पूर्व लिच्छविलिपिको अंक

चाँगुको मानदेवको अभिलेख र सूर्यघाटको विजयवतीको अभिलेख बाट

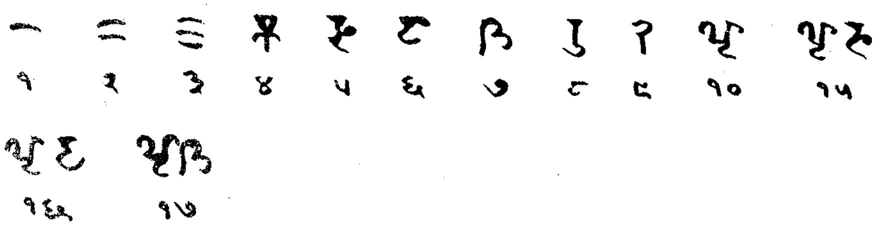


PLATE 81

[लिपिचित्र ६४]

देवनागरी लिपिको कूटाक्षर

महाकालसंहिता भन्ने पुस्तकबाट

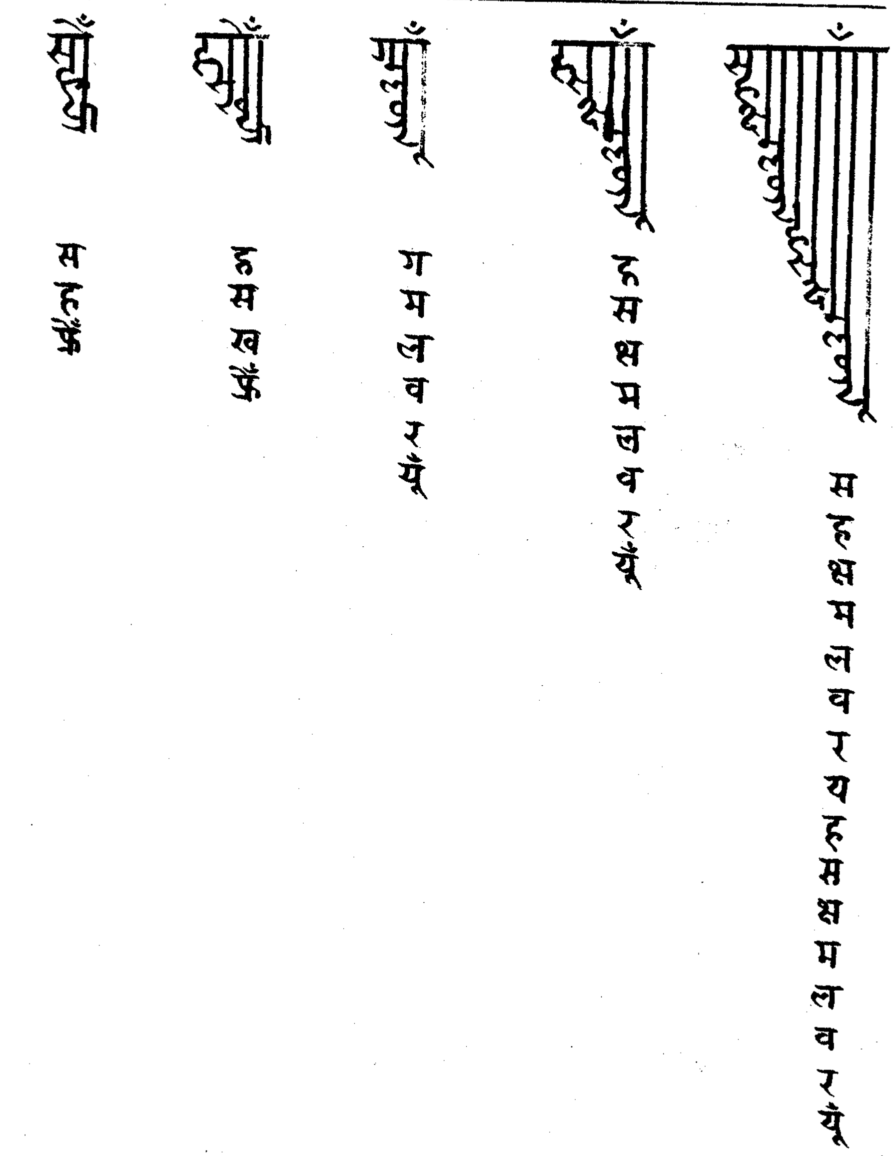
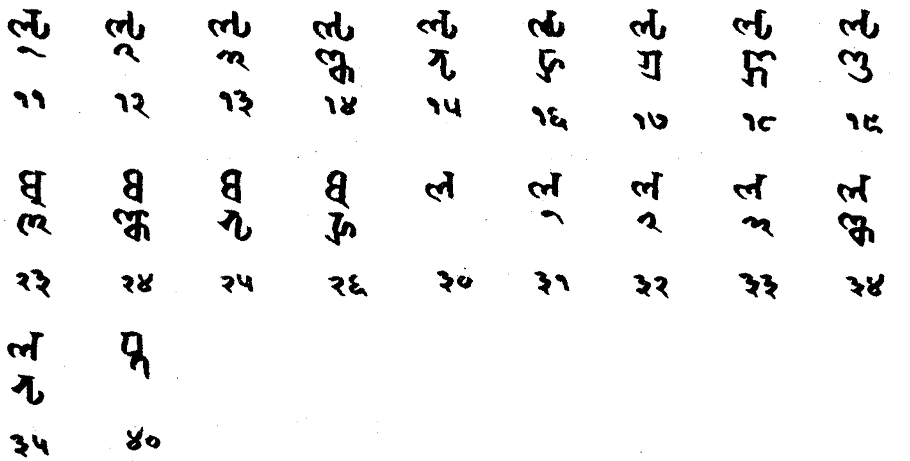


PLATE 84

[लिपिचित्र ३]

उत्तर लिच्छविलिपिको अंक

ताडपत्रमा लेखिएको संक्षिप्त भागवद्गीताबाट



ताडपत्रमा लेखिएको निश्वासतत्त्वमुखसंहिताबाट

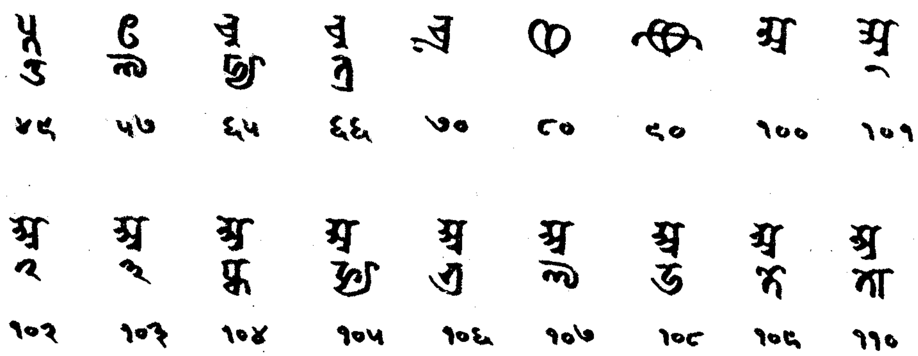
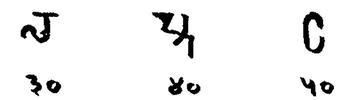
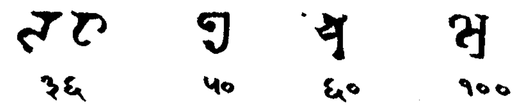


PLATE 83

प्रभुसंघको देउपाटनको अभिलेखबाट



पाटन चपटोलको मृगेनीको अभिलेखबाट



रत्न संघको देउपाटनको अभिलेखबाट

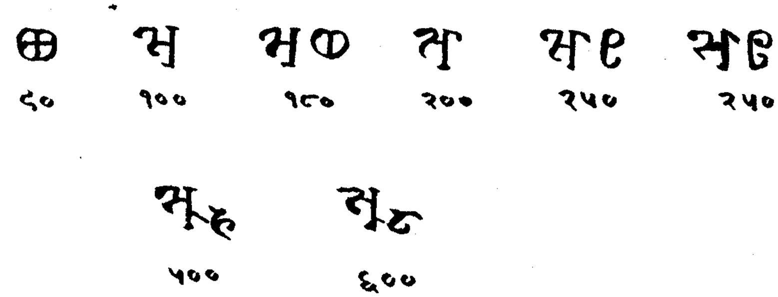


PLATE 85

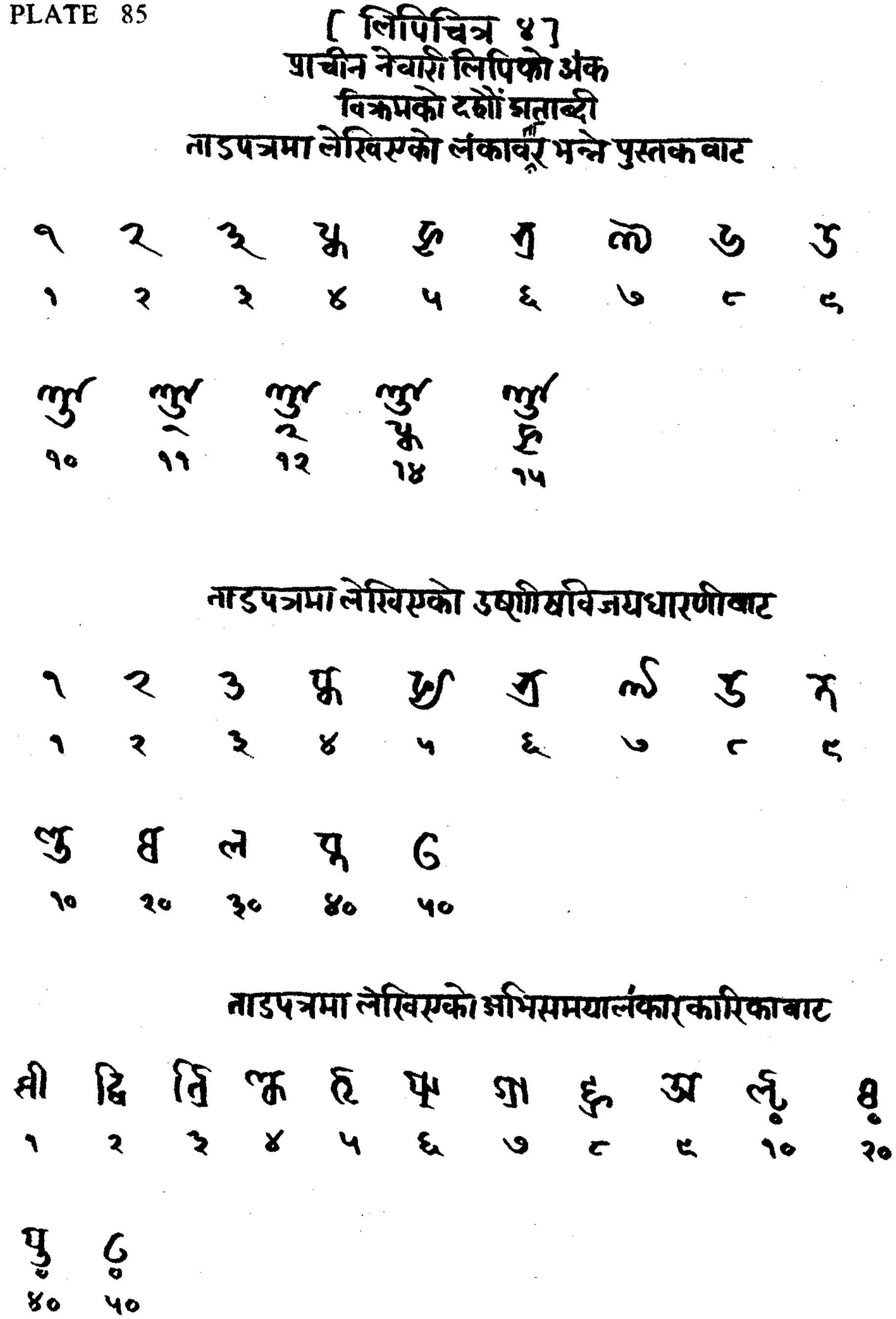


PLATE 86

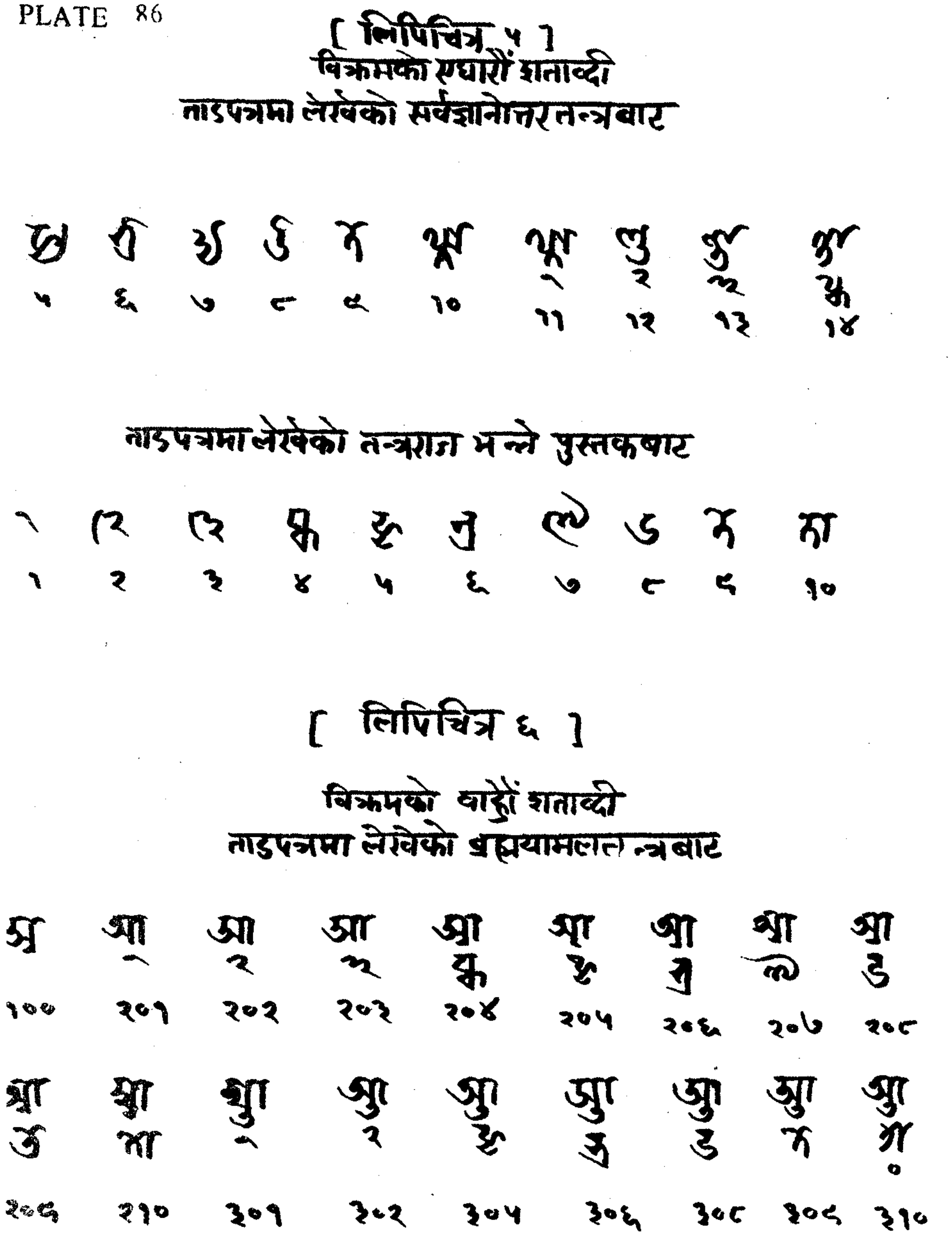
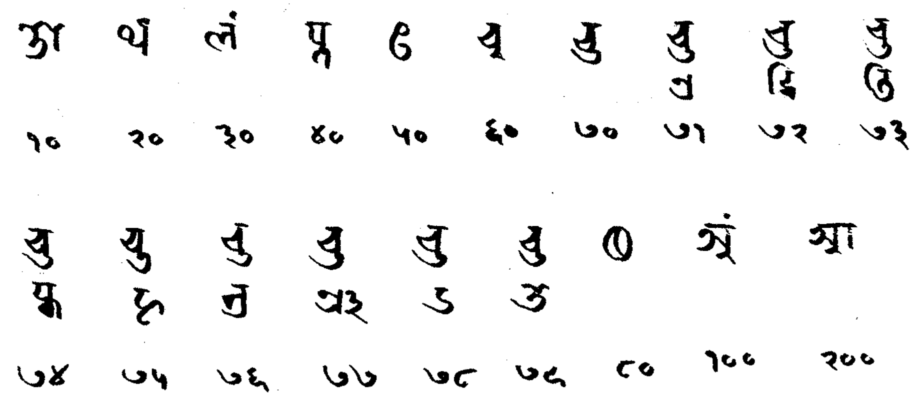


PLATE 87

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको माध्यन्दिनीय शुक्लयजुर्वेद संहिताबाट



[लिपिचित्र ७]

विक्रमको तेह्रौं शताब्दी

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको प्रतिष्ठालक्षण समुच्चयबाट

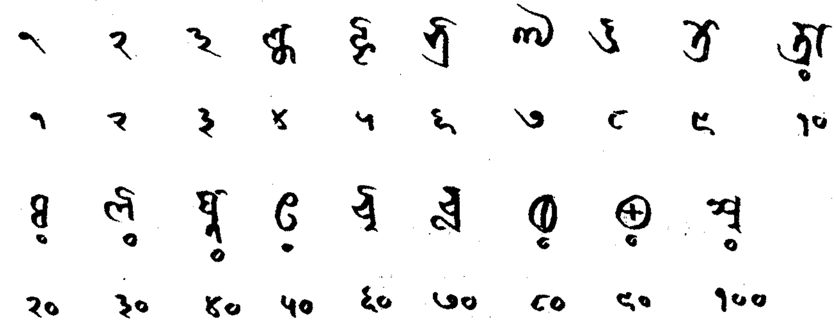
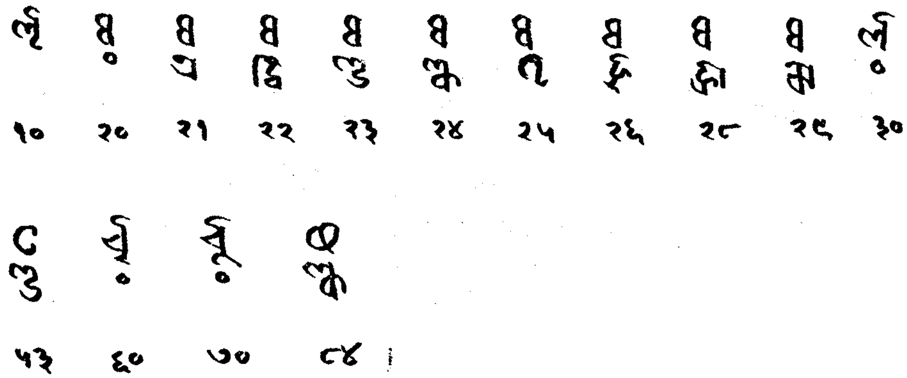


PLATE 88

[लिपिचित्र ८]

विक्रमको चौधौं शताब्दी

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको महालक्ष्मी मत भन्ने पुस्तकबाट



[लिपिचित्र ९]

विक्रमको पन्ध्रौं शताब्दी

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको सुग्रीवशास्त्र भन्ने पुस्तकबाट

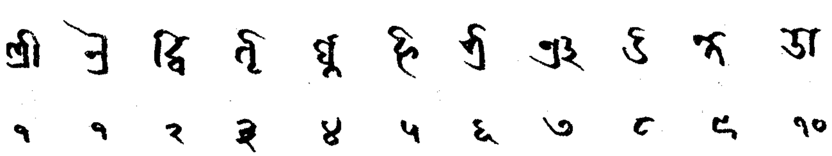


PLATE 90

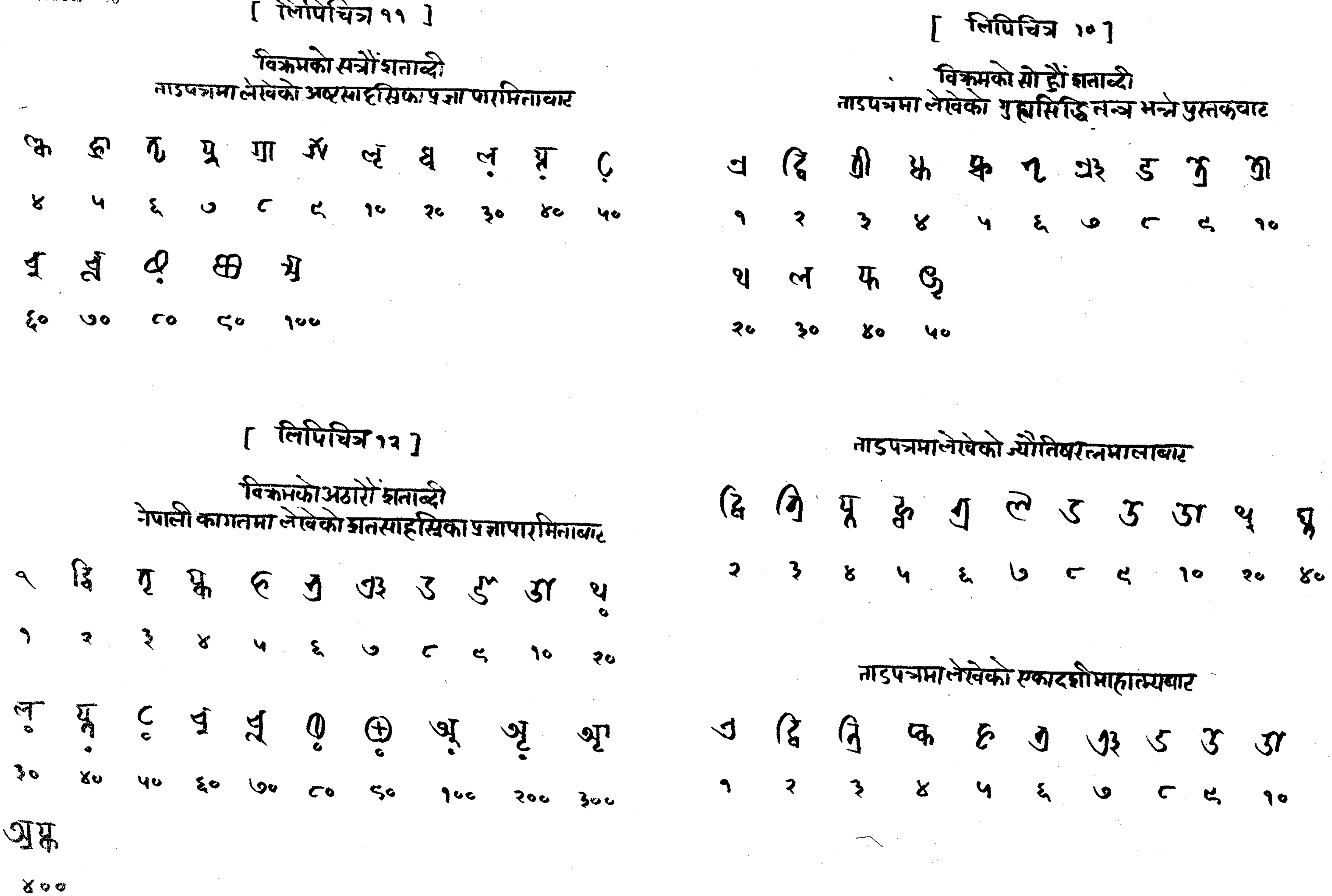

[लिपिचित्र ११]
विक्रमको सत्रौं शताब्दी
ताडपत्रमा लेखेको अष्टसाहस्रिका प्रज्ञापारमिताबाट
४ ५ ६ ७ ८ ९ १० २० ३० ४० ५०
६० ७० ८० ९० १००
[लिपिचित्र १०]
विक्रमको सोह्रौं शताब्दी
ताडपत्रमा लेखेको गुह्यसिद्धि तन्त्र भन्ने पुस्तकबाट
१ २ ३ ४ ५ ६ ७ ८ ९ १०
२० ३० ४० ५०
[लिपिचित्र १२]
विक्रमको अठारौं शताब्दी
नेपाली कागतमा लेखेको शतसाहस्रिका प्रज्ञापारमिताबाट
१ २ ३ ४ ५ ६ ७ ८ ९ १० २०
३० ४० ५० ६० ७० ८० ९० १०० २०० ३००
४००
ताडपत्रमा लेखेको ज्योतिषरत्नमालाबाट
२ ३ ४ ५ ६ ७ ८ ९ १० २० ४०
ताडपत्रमा लेखेको एकादशीमाहात्म्यबाट
१ २ ३ ४ ५ ६ ७ ८ ९ १०

PLATE 91

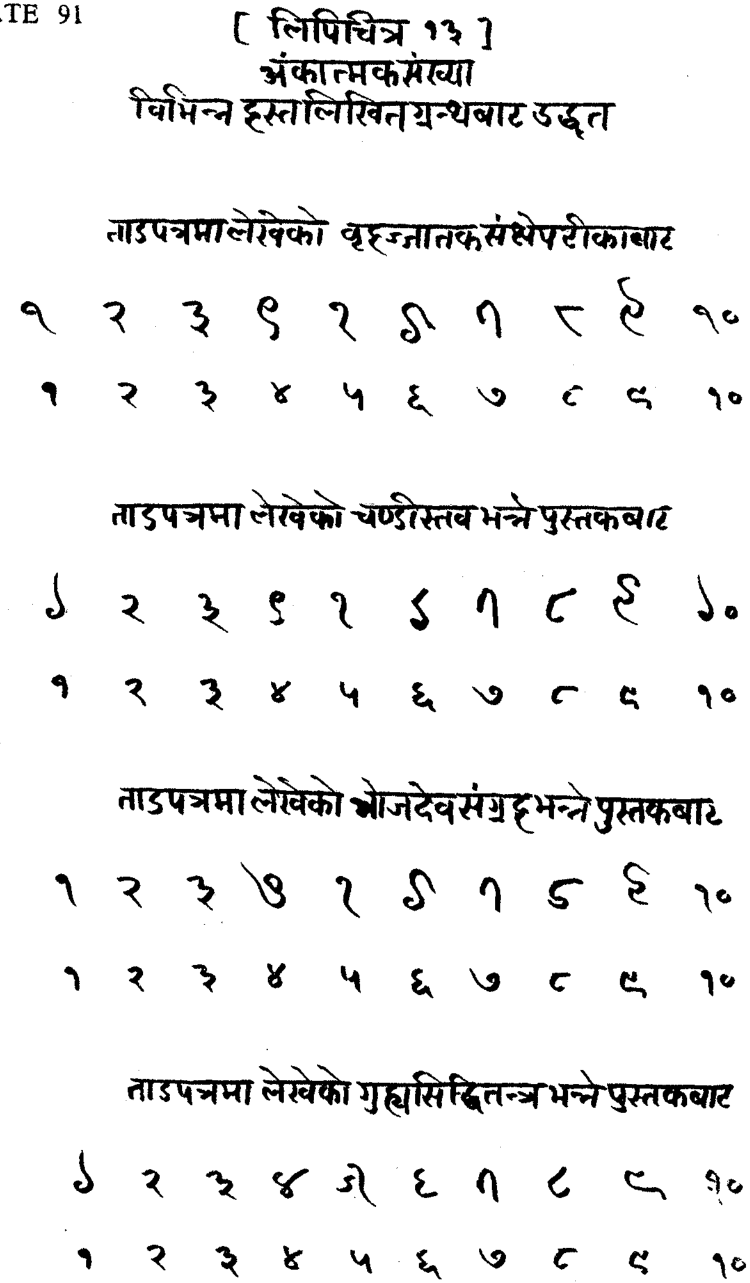


PLATE 92

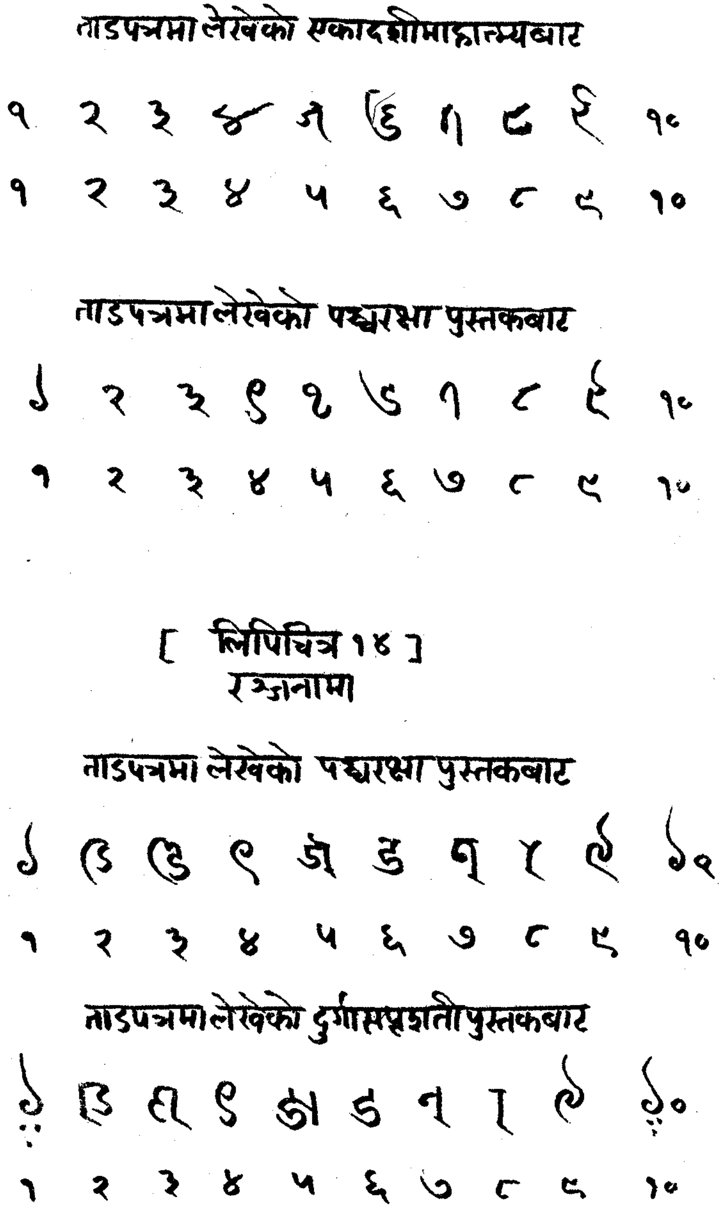


PLATE 94

[लिपिचित्र १६]
लिच्छविकालका अभिलेखमा प्राप्त
संवत्का अंकहरू

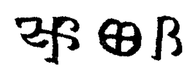
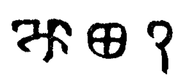
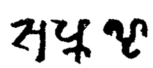
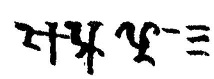
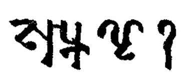
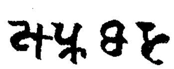
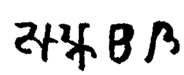
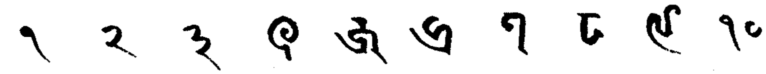
अभिलेखमा प्राप्त	संवत्का अंक	देवनागरीमा
चाँगुको मानदेवको स्तम्भको		३८६
लाजिमपाटको नरवर्माको		३८८
लाजिमपाट र तिलगंगाको मानदेवको		३८९
लाजिमपाटको क्षेमसुन्दरीको		३९०
विशालनगर, दुङालदेवीको मन्दिरको		३९७
देउपाटनको रत्नसंघको		३९९
पशुपति पञ्चदेवलको		४१०
पशुपतिको जयस्तम्भको		४१३
लाजिमपाटको गुणवतीको		४१९
पलाञ्चोकको विजयस्वामिनीको		४२५
चाँगुको निरपेक्षको		४२७
सूर्यघाटको विजयवतीको		४२७

PLATE 93

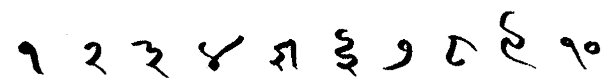
ताडपत्रमा लेखेको महामायास्तोत्र मन्त्र पुस्तकबाट



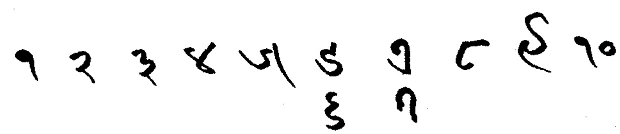
१ २ ३ ४ ५ ६ ७ ८ ९ १०

[लिपिचित्र १५]
प्राचीन देवनागरीमा

ताडपत्रमा लेखेको मतङ्गपारमेश्वर पुस्तकबाट



ताडपत्रमा लेखेको कुलमूलरत्नपञ्चकावतारबाट

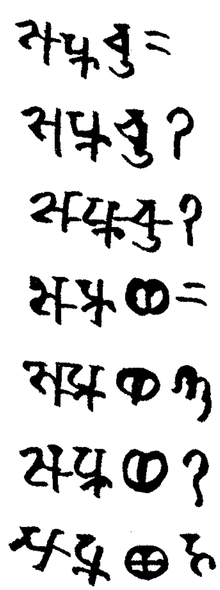


ताडपत्रमा लेखेको कुलालिकाम्नाय पुस्तकबाट



१ २ ३ ४ ५ ६ ७ ८ ९ १०

PLATE 96

अभिलेखमा प्राप्त	संवत्का अंक	देवनागरीमा
ह्राँडिगाउँको भारविको		४७२
फर्पिङ कोटालटोलको		४७९
काठमाडौं ब्रह्मटोलको		४७९
चौकीटारको गणदेव, भौमगुप्तको		४८२
देउपाटन त्यागलटोलको ,,		४८७
चपलीगाउँको		४८९
पाटन शङ्खमूल सिकुबहीको		४९५

[लिपिचित्र १७]

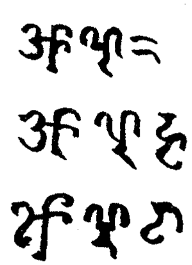
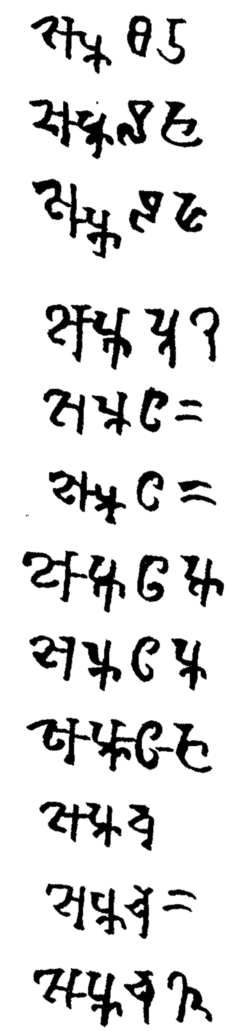
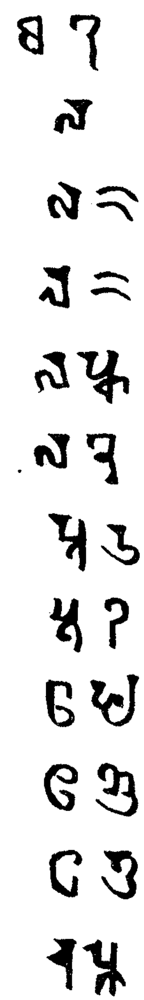
अभिलेखमा प्राप्त	संवत्का अंक	देवनागरीमा
बूढानीलकण्ठनिरको शिवदेव र भौमगुप्तका पालाको		५१२
पाटन च्यासलटोलको		५१५
पाटन भीमसेनथानको शिवदेव र अंशुवर्माको		५१६

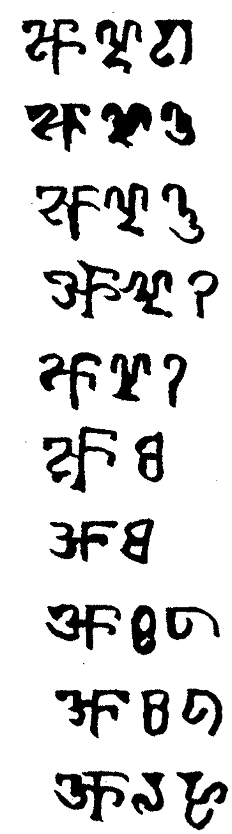
PLATE 95

अभिलेखमा प्राप्त	संवत्का अंक	देवनागरीमा
थानकोटको आदिनारायणमन्दिरको		४२८
पाटन गह्वालुरवाको वसन्तदेवको		४३५
जैसीदेवलको वसन्तदेवको		४३५
किसिपीडीको ,,		४४९
पाटन रवींपङ्केको वसन्तदेवको		४५२
पशुपतिआर्यघाटको		४५२
चौकीटारको वसन्तदेवको		४५४
बलम्बु पर्सिंग्यको वसन्तदेवको		४५४
पशुपति भस्मेश्वरको		४५५
साँखु दुगाह्हिटीको वामनदेवको		४६०
पशुपति वत्सलानि आभीरीको		४६२
मृगस्थलीवारोको रामदेव, क्रमलीलको पालाको		४६७

[लिपिचित्र १८]



अभिलेखमा प्राप्त	संवत्का अंक	देवनागरीमा
बुङमतीको अंशुवर्माको		२९
हाँडिगाउँको "		३०
हाडिगाउँको "		३२
साँगाको "		३२
पाटन सुनधाराको		३४
देउपाटनको अंशुवर्माको		३९
पाटन छिन्नमस्ताको ध्रुवदेव, जिष्णुगुप्तको		४८
मालाटारको "		४९
बलम्बुको भीमार्जुनदेव, विष्णुगुप्तको		५५
मालिगाउँको		५७
थानकोटको भीमार्जुनदेव, जिष्णुगुप्तको		५७
यङ्गालहिटीको भीमार्जुनदेव र विष्णुगुप्तको		६४



अभिलेखमा प्राप्त	संवत्का अंक	देवनागरीमा
भक्तपुर गोलमाढीटोलको		५१६
धर्मस्थलीको शिवदेव, अंशुवर्माको		५१७
बूढानीलकण्ठको "		५१७
सनुङ्गलको "		५१९
टोखाको		५१९
धरमपुरको		५२०
खोपासीको शिवदेव, अंशुवर्माको		५२०
धापासीको "		५२६
लेलेको "		५२६
कान्तिपुर ज्याबहाल		५३५

PLATE 100

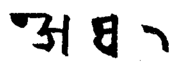
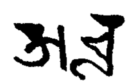
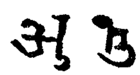
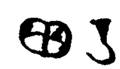
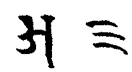
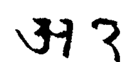
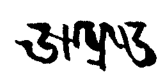
अभिलेखमा प्राप्त	संवत्का अंक	देवनागरीमा
सुनागुठीको शिवदेवको		१२१
वलम्बुको शिवदेवको		१२९
पाटन च्यासलटोल नायहिटीको		१३७
पाटन मीननाथको धाराको		१४८
जैसीदेवलको टुटेधाराको		१५१
पशुपतिको जयदेवको		१५७
पाटन मङ्गलवजार डवलीको		१७०
पाटन सुवहालको		१८७
काठमाडौं हनूमानढोकाको		२०७

PLATE 99

अभिलेखमा प्राप्त	संवत्का अंक	देवनागरीमा
सुनागुठीको भीमार्जुनदेव, विष्णुगुप्तको		६५
पाटन तलेजु चोकको नरेन्द्रदेवको		६७
यङ्गालहिटीको नरेन्द्रदेवको		६७
देउपाटन चोंढेटोलको ,, पालाको		६९
देउपाटन कसाईंटोलको नरेन्द्रदेवको		७१
नक्साल भगवतीवहालको ,, पालाको		७८
पाटन गैह्रीधाराको नरेन्द्रदेवको		८३
वलम्बु प्रणिधिपूर्णविहारको		९०
पाटन च्यासलटोलको		९८
पशुपति वज्रघरको नरेन्द्रदेवको		१०३
पाटन मच्छिन्द्रनाथको ढोकानिरको		१०९
नाला लगनटोलको शिवदेवका पालाको		११८

E 102

परिशिष्ट
[लिपिचित्र १]
मैथिली लिपि

नादशास्त्र भन्ने पुस्तकबाट उद्धृत — वी·पु·प्र·नं· ७९२



अ आ इ ई उ ऊ



ख ग घ च ज झ ञ ट ड ढ



त थ द ध न प फ ब भ म



र ल व श ष स ह क्ष ज्ञ त्र

रा·पु· नं· ३२५८ को अमरकोशको पुस्तकबाट उद्धृत



अ आ इ ई उ ऊ ऋ ए ऐ



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PLATE 101

[लिपिचित्र १९]
हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थमा प्राप्त
संवत्का अङ्कहरु

हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थमा प्राप्त	संवत्का अंक	देवनागरीमा
लंकावतार भन्ने ताडपत्रको		२८
किरणतन्त्र भन्ने		४४
योगायाज्ञवल्क्यसंहिता भन्ने		१४४
ब्रह्मयामलतन्त्र भन्ने		१७२
सिद्धान्तसारपद्धति भन्ने		१९७
स्कन्दपुराण भन्ने ताडपत्रको		२३४
पञ्चरक्षा भन्ने ताडपत्रको		२५३
प्रज्ञापारमिता भन्ने "		२७२
शतसाहस्त्री प्रज्ञापारमिता भन्ने		७६९
भगवत्यास्वेदाया यथा लब्ध तन्त्रराजको ग्रन्थसंख्या		१८००

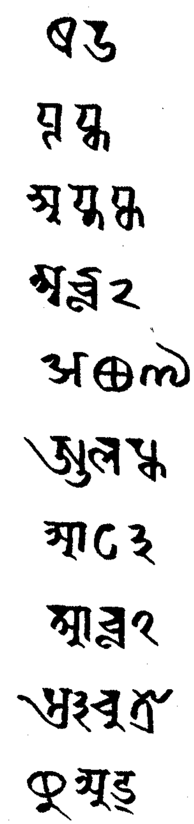


PLATE 105

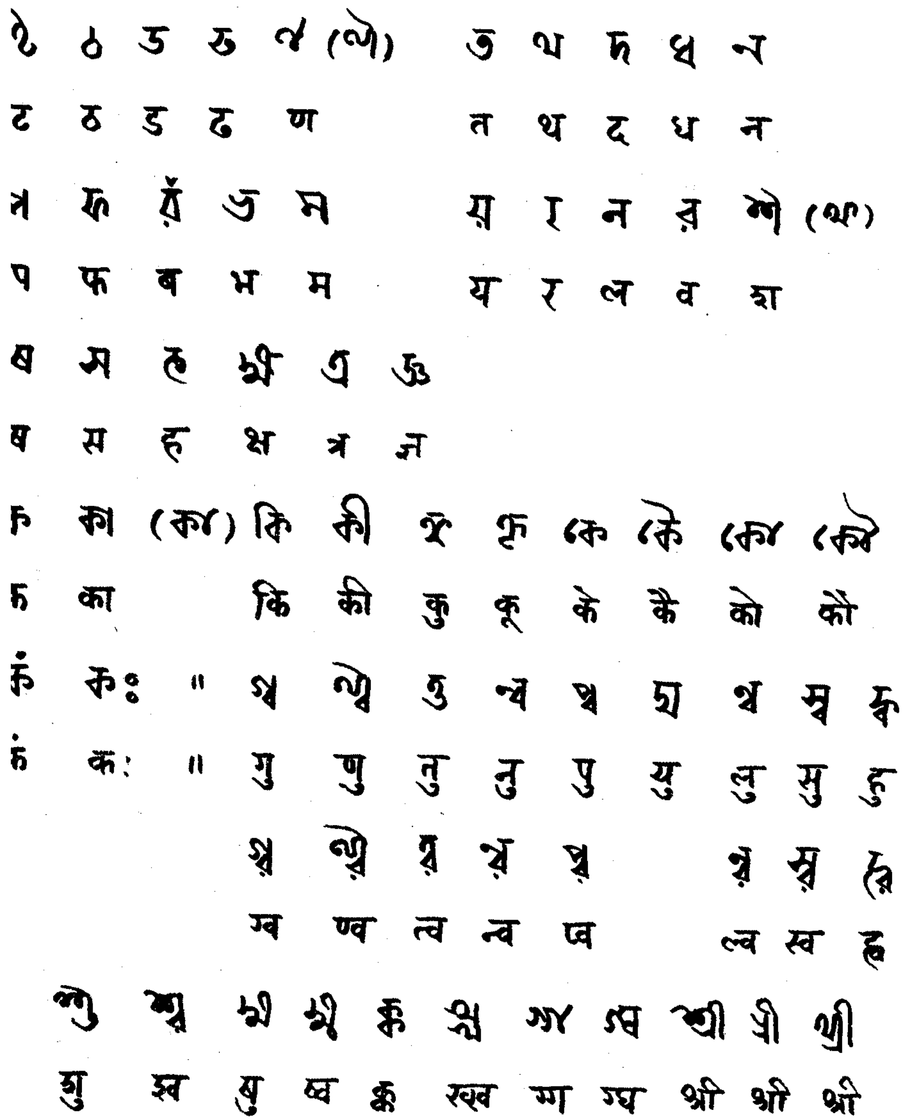


PLATE 103

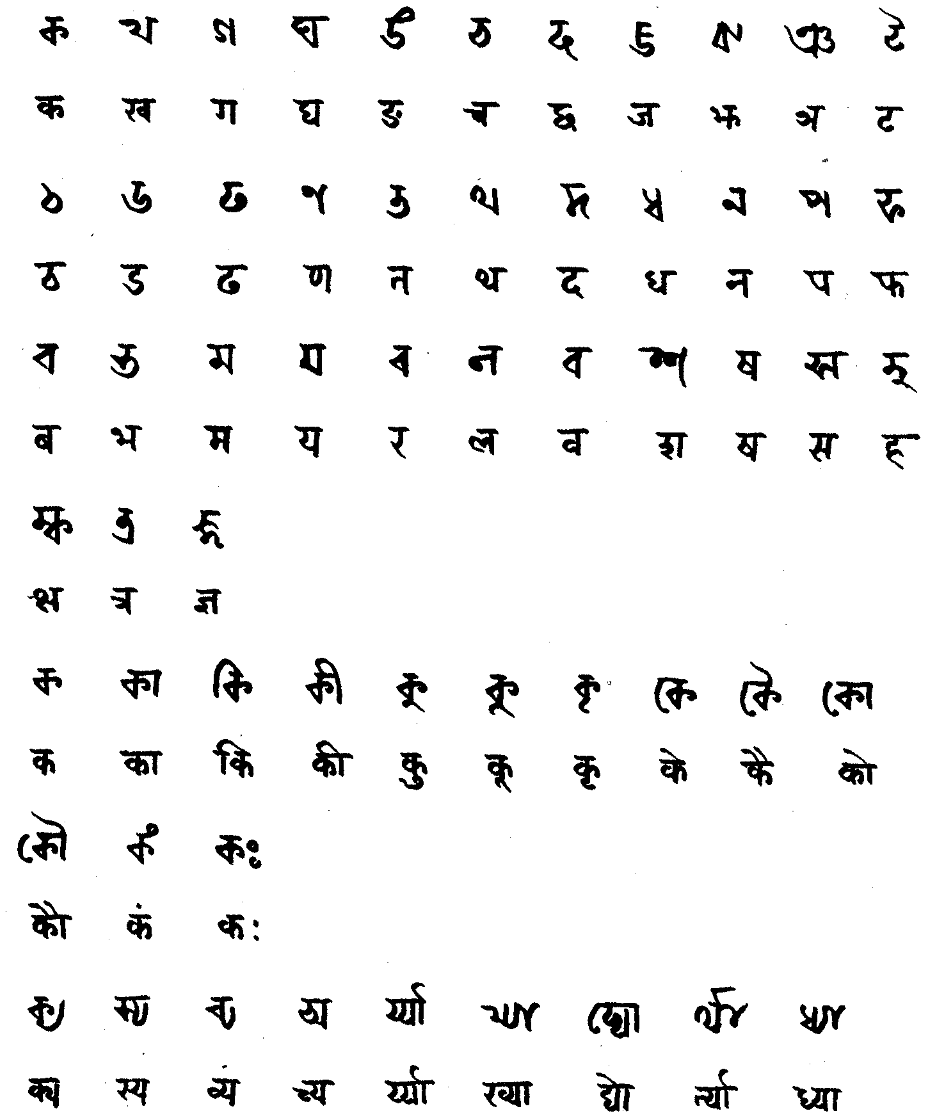


PLATE 104

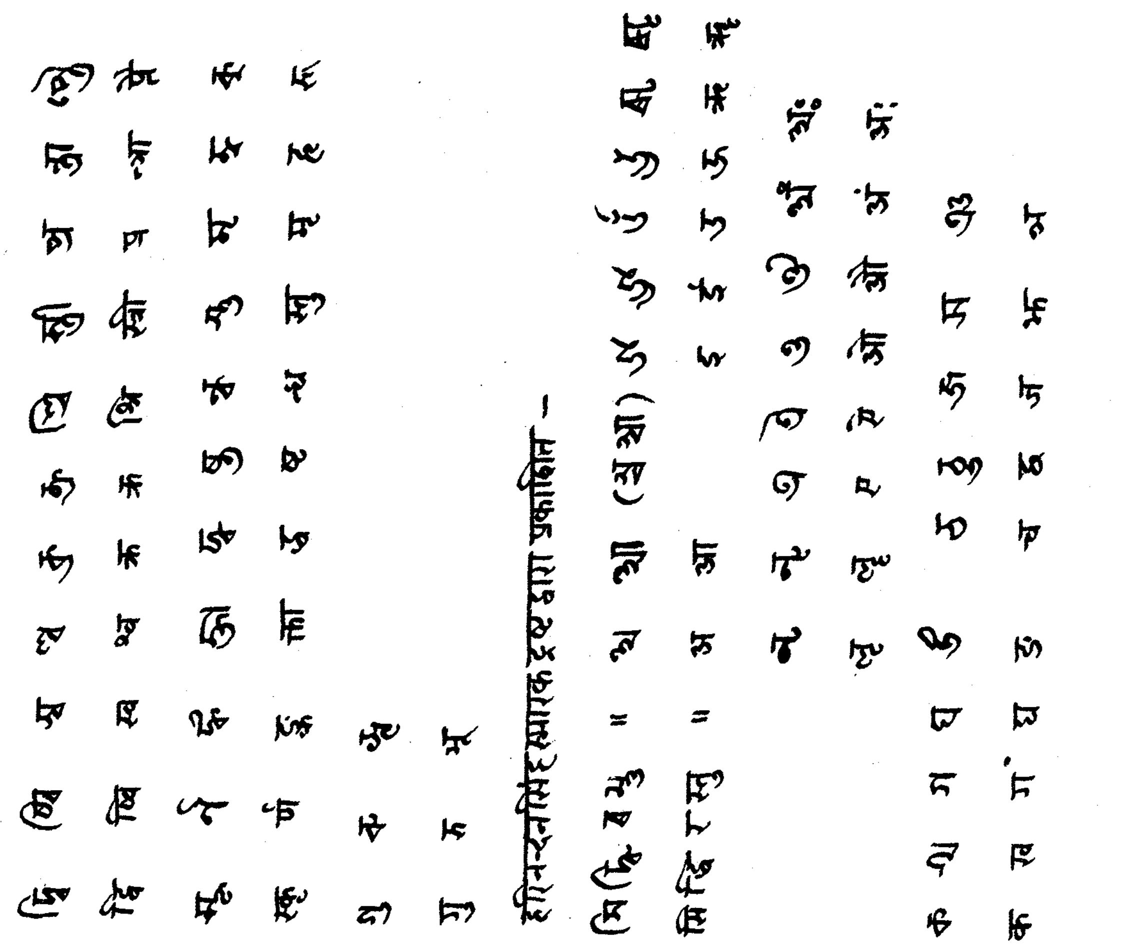


PLATE 106



PLATE 108

लिपिचित्र २
किरातलिपिको वर्णमाला

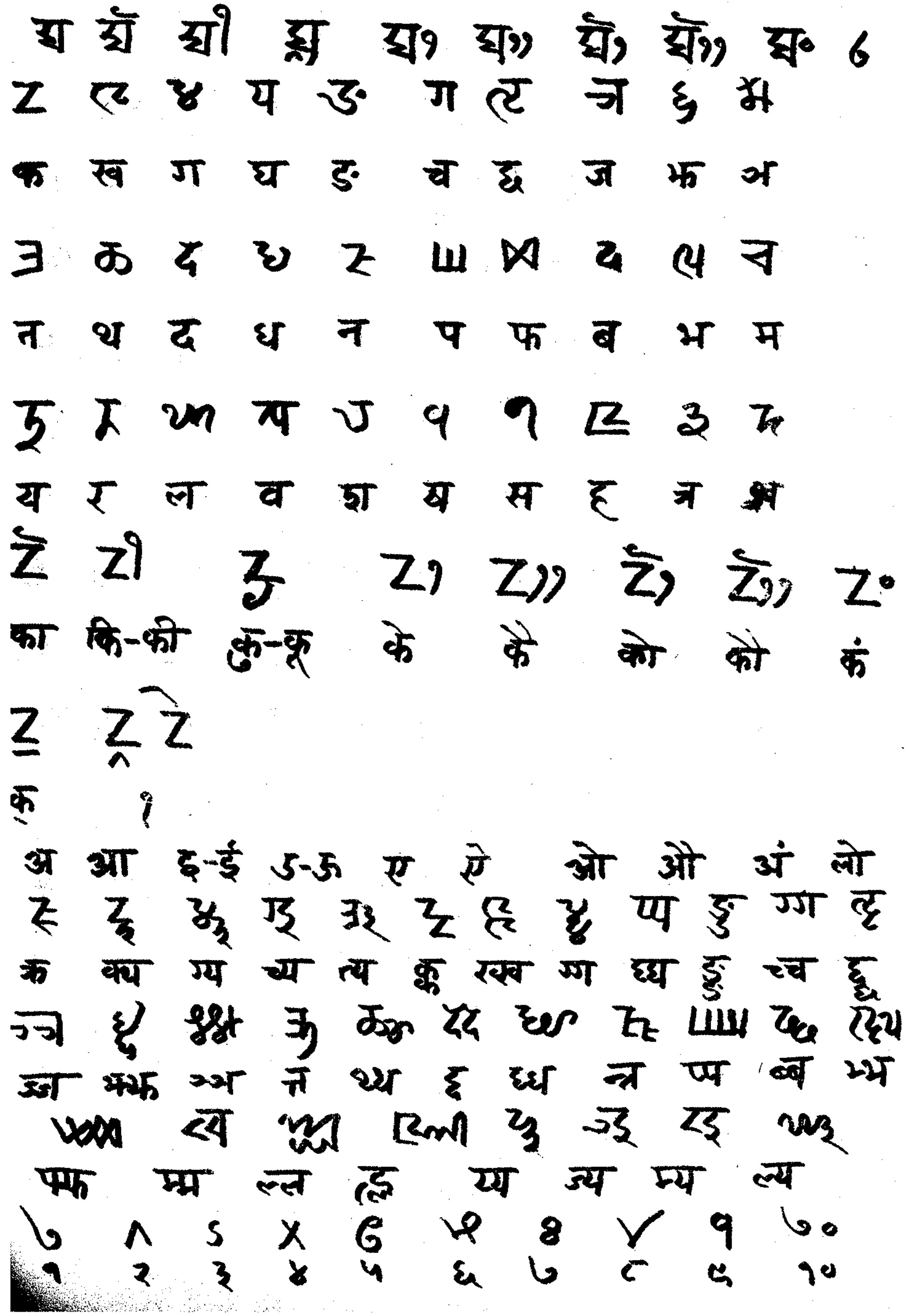
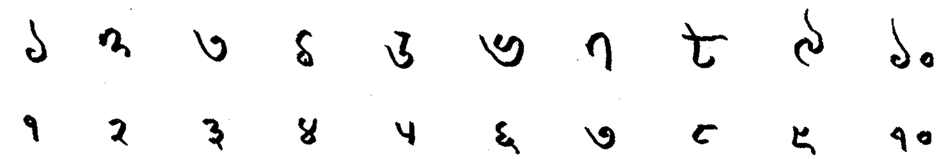
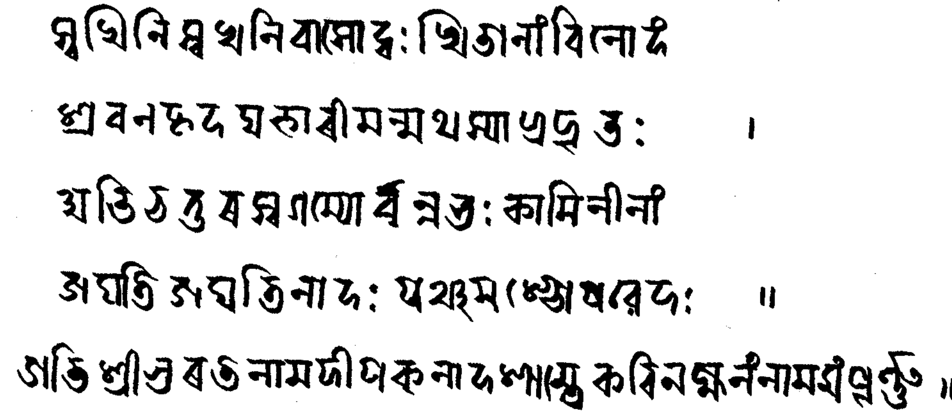


PLATE 107

मैथिली लिपिको अंक



भरतनादशास्त्रको अन्तिम पत्रको पुष्पिका —



सुखिनिसुखनिवासो दुःखितानां विनोदं

श्रवण कृदयभारी मन्मथस्याग्र भूत: ।

अतिचतुरसुगम्यो वल्लभ: कामिनीनां

जयतिजयति नाद: पञ्चमश्चोपवेद : ॥

इति श्रीभरतनामदीपकनादशास्त्रे कविलक्षणं नाम संपूर्ण्णं ॥

Summary.

All scripts in Nepal are said to derive ultimately from the Brahmi script. This latter script was believed to have been invented by Brahma, the creator of the universe. Early Jain Sutras and certain Buddhist texts mention the Brahmi script. It was in this script that the majority of the inscriptions of Açoka was recorded. It was commonly belived that the Devanagari script orginated from the Devas or Gods: but in fact Devanagari script developed from the Brahmi script and diverged from it grandually.

Alongside the Brahmi script, a new script developed during the Gupta period and was known as the Gupta script, later called also the Kutila script. The reign of the Licchavis in Nepal coincided with that of the Guptas in India and both dynasties used the same Gupta script. During the rule of the Malla, the script was similar to that used in Mithila. Prior to Jayasthiti Malla's rule the script was known as "Ancient Newari" and thereafter as "Newari". The use of this script was current in the Eastern Dolakha region. The Western Mallas used the ancient Devanagari script. Different "Newari" scripts existed in the Malla period such as Bhujimol, Kumol, Ranjana, the latter being the most attractive and best known. Indian-orgin scripts were popular because the written forms were not complicated. Each letter was believed to be governed by a special deity.

The introduction of printing-machines put copyists out of business besides ending the continued use of the old scripts. However, after the appearance of Kirkpatrick's Account of Nepal in 1811 A. D. and the and publication of Lichchavi and Malla inscriptions by Pandit Bhagawan Lal Indraji in 1880 A. D., interest in the old scripts revived in Nepal. The usual materials employed in writing the old scripts were (a) Palm-leaf (b) Brich-bark (c) Cotton paper (d) Textile (e) Wood (f) Ink (g) Pen (h) Salaka (ruler for drawing straight lines).

The author next devotes some space to the use of Sambats (eras). Kaliyug sambat came into use soon after the Mahabharata war, and is also known as Yudhistir Sambat. Later the Nanda, Chandra Gupta, Shudrakadev, Shaka and Manadev Sambats came to be used. The difference between certain sambats is as follows:

Kaligata and Vikram sambat: 4505-1461=3044

Kaligata and Shaka era: 4505—1326=3179

Vikram and Shaka era: 1461—1326=135

Kaligata and Nepal era: 4505-524=3981

Vikram and Nepal era: 1461-524=937

Shaka and Nepal era: 1326—524=802

Nepal sambat begins at Kartik Sukla pratipada whereas Shaka sambat begins from Chaitra sukla pratipada. Vikram sambat starts on the first of Baisakh. Therefore the difference between Vikram and Nepal eras is 936 years. Likewise, the difference in years between Shaka and Nepal Era, since the Nepal Era starts on Kartik sukla pratipada and the Shaka on the first of Baisakh, comes to 801. Shaka sambat dates can be equated to Christian era dates by adding 78 years. And Nepal sambat dates plus 880 years correspond to Christian era dates.

After the Licchavi period changes came gradually in the scripts with the modification of vowel patterns. Pre-Licchavi script pre-dates Manadev I, and Post-Licchavi script dates from after Amshuvarman. Around the 10th century V. S., Newari script seems to have been in a formative stage called "Ancient Newari". In the 11th century, more artistic talent was deployed by the scribes and scripts like Bhujimol and Kumol came into use. However the use of these latter was not practical in everyday life and they disappeared slowly. There are some similarities between the old Malla and the Mithila scripts; and the script of the Karnali Zone is similar to Devanagari script.

The script used by the ancient Kirati is not accessible, but script used at present among them is available for study. There are very wide differences between the Kirat and other scripts and much research remains to be done on the formative period of of this script. Eventually, with the establishment of the Shaha dynasty in Nepal, Devanagari came into permanent and widespread use. Changes took place slowly and one script was not suddently replaced by another—just as palmleaf was still used after the introduction of paper.